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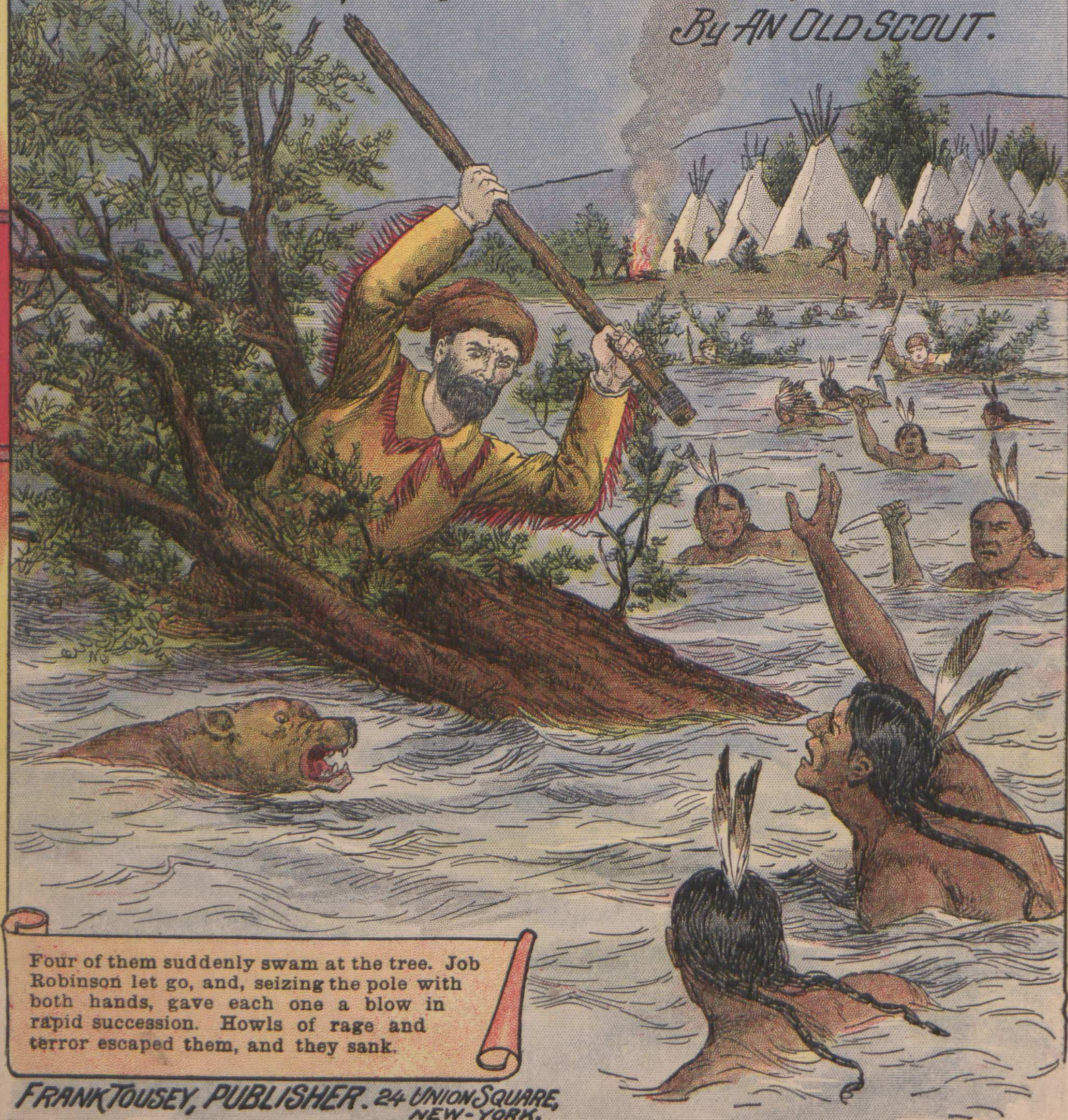
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# PLUCK AND LUCK

OLD DISASTER;  
OR, THE PERILS OF THE PIONEERS.

*By AN OLD SCOUT.*



Four of them suddenly swam at the tree. Job Robinson let go, and, seizing the pole with both hands, gave each one a blow in rapid succession. Howls of rage and terror escaped them, and they sank.

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# PLUCK AND LUCK

## Stories of Adventure.

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# OLD DISASTER

OR,

## THE PERILS OF THE PIONEERS

By AN OLD SCOUT

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE TRAPPER AND HIS DOG PERDITION.

On the right bank of the Ohio river, a score of miles above the present site of Cincinnati, stood a rude log cabin, probably the first one built by white men west of the Alleghanies. It was made very strong and evidently with an eye to defensive warfare, for the logs were hewn so as to fit one upon another without leaving any crevices between them. The only door to the cabin was built of solid oak three inches thick, and hung on both wooden and rawhide hinges.

In front of the cabin sat a man in the garb of a pioneer trapper. He was about fifty years of age, rather tall and of sinewy build. His hair and beard were slightly tinged with gray, but his ruddy complexion, clear blue eyes and elastic buoyant step plainly indicated that the hand of Father Time had touched him but lightly. He was dressed in the garb of pioneer hunters—deerskin hunting shirt and leggings, with the inevitable coonskin cap. Across his knees, as he sat in front of the cabin, reposed a long rifle, and he eyed and handled it with the affection of a lover. In a belt was a hunting-knife of a homely pattern, which must have been made by a pioneer blacksmith somewhere on the other side of the mountains.

At his feet crouched a dog of the crossed cur and bull species. The animal had a number of scars on his head and body, which told of fierce battles with bears, panthers and other beasts of the primeval forest. But his honest face and watchful eyes showed fidelity and intelligence of a high canine order.

Both master and dog seemed to be intently gazing out over the great river that rolled so placidly by on its way to join the great "Father of Waters." It would have been difficult indeed for one to divine just what they were interested in out on the river, as a profound quiet reigned over the scene. A slight haze hung over the river, which the warm sun of the day had not entirely dispersed.

"They're a long time comin', Perdition," said the trapper, looking down at the dog, "an' I don't half like it. 'Pears ter me they're had a little diffikilty over thar somers. If we had been thar we'd have helped 'em out a bit—eh, Perdition?"

The dog wagged his tail and looked up at his master in a way that plainly showed he understood every word he uttered.

"Yes, we'd have flung the pesky redskins around lively, old boy, an' we'll do it yet if they've been givin' 'em trouble. They ought ter be back afore this, yer know," and he looked at the dog as he spoke as if he believed the animal understood every word he said.

"I know yer think as I do, Perdition," continued the trapper, addressing the dog, "an' yer want ter to be up and over thar with 'em. But we'll wait and see if they come back ter-night. They're mighty good boys, Perdition, an' ther redskins don't allers get ahead of 'em. What is it now, Perdition? Don't see no redskins, eh?"

The dog had risen to his feet and growled as he glared at some object over the river. His short bristles stood up erect on his back and his eyes glared as with the light of battle.

His master knew that his dog's keen sight was better than his, and so did not doubt that something unusual had attracted his attention. A few moments after the dog sprang up the antlered head of a deer was seen in the water on the further side of the river.

The noble animal had plunged into the water for the purpose of crossing the stream.

"Perdition," said the trapper, turning to the dog, "that ar buck ain't fleein' from his shadder. It's redskins, and no mistake. We won't take no advantage of him, Perdition. We'll let him go on and save his meat. I won't eat deer-meat which flies from sich pesky varmints as them redskins."

The buck came almost straight across the stream. The current carried him but little out of the way, and the man and dog watched him with eager interest.

As the deer neared the shore the dog wanted to go down



to the water's edge to meet him, but the trapper spoke to him, saying:

"Let him alone, Perdition. We don't want no meat ter-day."

The dog laid down again, resting his head on his forepaws and keeping both eyes on the deer.

As the buck neared the shore the man saw the feathered end of an arrow sticking up out of the water. From its position he judged that the other end was fastened in the animal's shoulder.

"Ah, Perdition, my boy," he said, "it's a marcy ter kill him and put him out of pain. He'll go limpin' along through life with that 'ere arrow a-stickin' in him. Run down thar and take him, Perdition, when he lands."

Perdition needed no urging.

He sprang up and darted away like an arrow, running down to the river bank to the spot the deer was making for.

"That's the knowin'est dog that ever lived," said the trapper, rising and stalking off in the direction the dog had already, "an' disaster follows everything he takes hold of, an' that's a fact."

The trapper heard a struggle in the bushes on the water's edge and hastened to see what was going on. The dog had seized the buck by the throat the moment he emerged from the water, and the almost exhausted animal was making but a feeble resistance.

The trapper seized him by one of his great antlers and dexterously threw him on his back. Perdition still held to his throat, but not making the least noise. Quickly drawing his hunting-knife, the trapper severed the juglar vein and the noble animal's life blood spurted out over the leaf-covered ground.

"Let go, Perdition," he said, and the dog released his hold.

The deer gave a few spasmodic kicks and then yielded its life to the inhumanity of man.

No sooner was the buck dead than the trapper proceeded to examine the arrow found sticking in its shoulder.

He cut it out and looked at the flint-head for a minute or two.

"Redskins," he muttered, as he threw the arrow into the water. "Them boys is in trouble, Perdition, an' if they don't come in to-night we'll spread disaster over thar among them pesky redskins."

The dog wagged his tail and looked up at his master in a way that denoted a thorough understanding as to his meaning.

The trapper cut out the two hams of the buck and let the dog have all the fresh meat he wanted. After that he threw the balance of the carcass into the river.

Taking the hams up to the cabin, he hung them up in the chimney, where two bear hams were already hanging in the smoke. This done, he sat down in front of the cabin, again, with his faithful rifle across his knees and again resumed the task of gazing out over the river.

They had not gazed long ere a canoe shot out from the opposite bank and pushed boldly out into the stream. In it were two young white men, who were dressed precisely as the old trapper in front of the cabin was.

The moment the dog saw the canoe he sprang up and wagged his tail and gave a short, buoyant bark of welcome.

"Yes, that's them, Perdition," said the trapper, "an' they've got their ha'r on all right."

The young men rower across the river as if in quite a hurry to reach the right bank, and the old trapper at the cabin door kept a sharp watch on their movements.

"Perdition," he said to the dog, "yer may sharpen yer teeth for a scrimmage, for them boys is runnin' home as sure as yer live and wag a tail."

The dog gave a short bark of welcome to the young hunters

in the canoe, and would have become even more boisterous had not his master said:

"Keep low, boy, an' wait. Thar's trouble ahead. Just wait till they come in."

The dog wagged his tail and gazed at the canoe, but made no more noise.

By and by the canoe reached the right bank of the river and disappeared under the bluff on which the cabin stood. Perdition sprang inside and left his master seated at the door.

Let us follow the dog and see where he went after entering the cabin.

In one corner was a small trap-door, which was open at the time. The dog went down through with the agility of a rat escaping into his hole and disappeared from sight.

Three feet below the trap-door was another hole, in the ground, alongside of which was a large flat rock. Like a flash he disappeared through that one and went bounding down a rude stairway made of earth and stone in the fissure of the rock. Down, down he went till he reached a large chamber or cavern, in which stood the two young men who were seen in the canoe only a few minutes before.

While one dragged the canoe up on the rocks the other turned and patted Perdition on the head in recognition of the dog's welcome.

The cavern was dimly lighted by the reflection of the sun on the water outside of the entrance, which was effectually concealed by overhanging vines and bushes. By the light thus obtained one could see much of the cavern after the eyes became accustomed to it.

In the cavern were various articles belonging to the hunters, such as a large quantity of smoked bear and venison hams, and a large number of skins and many other articles of use that naturally accumulate in the course of time about a human habitation.

The boat, or canoe, having been properly secured, the two young men took from it four fine venison hams and hung them up in a place prepared for them in the cavern. Then they made their way up the rude stairway to the cabin on the bluff. The dog preceded them and bounded up through the hole in the cabin floor.

The young men followed, and in another minute or two were seated in the doorway talking to the old man.

"The redskins are thick over thar, father," said the taller of the two young hunters.

"On ther warpath?" the father asked.

"Yes. They're allers on the warpath," said the younger.

"We had ter kill four of 'em ter keep our ha'r."

"Wharabouts?"

"About four miles down the river."

"Who are they—what tribe?"

"Miamis."

"Did yer see any over thar?" and the father pointed across the river whence they had just come.

"No."

Then he told them about the wounded deer which he and Perdition had caught and slaughtered. They seemed surprised, and wondered if they had been seen by a party of redskins from the other shore.

"Ah! thar they be!" said the old trapper, pointing to a canoe full of Indians which shot out of the bushes on the other side just at that moment.

## CHAPTER II.

### HOW THE TRAPPERS OVERCAME GREAT ODDS.

Job Robinson, the father of the two young hunters, crossed the Alleghanies five years previous to the opening of our story and settled on the right bank of the Ohio with his two stalwart sons. His wife had died several years before, and the be-



reaved husband and father believed that if he moved further west, right into the heart of the Indian country, the constant struggle to keep his footing there would give him employment sufficient to distract his thoughts from the past. His two brave boys agreed to accompany him, for they were as fond of adventure as himself, and as courageous.

The reader will comprehend the daring of the three men when it is known that Daniel Boone had not yet penetrated the dark and bloody grounds of Kentucky when the little log cabin of Job Robinson was built on the banks of the Ohio river.

The cabin had been twice burned when the famous trapper was introduced to the reader. But the cavern underneath afforded them a safe retreat, and the Indians went away in the belief that the palefaces had perished in the flames. They were astonished at seeing another cabin there a few weeks later and the same three palefaces in quiet possession of it.

They believed that some "great medicine" was involved in the affair, and never afterward interfered with it. That was the Mingoes, a fierce tribe that lived north and west of them. They would attack the men, though, whenever they met them.

Daniel and Peter, Job's two sons, soon became as expert at trapping, hunting and fighting Indians as their father. But the terrible strength and tiger-like ferocity of the old man when attacked soon earned him a name among the redskins and a few renegade allies that made them tremble when they heard it mentioned. From his habit of calling every fight a "disaster," he soon became known as "Old Disaster" by the redskins and their renegade allies.

The canoe full of Miamis that was now approaching the cabin on the bluff did not have the effect of even causing the three whites to take any precautions whatever as against them. "Old Disaster" sat on the seat in front of the cabin and Dan and Peter reclined in the door, looking at the canoe as it neared the bank. The current carried them 200 yards below the bluff, where they landed.

As soon as the canoe struck the river bank the Miamis sprang out and gave a war-whoop.

Still the three white men kept their seats, but kept their eyes on the redskins and their hands on their trusty rifles.

Up the hill the Miamis ran and then stopped to gaze in amazement at what they saw.

There sat the three palefaces, apparently as unconcerned as if no hair-lifting redskin was within a thousand miles of them.

They seemed puzzled what to do, when Job Robinson called out:

"Let my pale face not frighten my red brothers. The red man is welcome if he means peace."

The chief then advanced toward the cabin, followed by his braves, and asked:

"Who paleface?"

"We are children of the Great Spirit—the same as the red man," replied Job Robinson, in the Miami tongue, much to their astonishment. "We are glad ter see the Miamis," and he advanced to shake hands with the chief.

The chief shook hands with him, but it was plain to the old trapper and his two sons that he did not mean peace.

The chief asked:

"Who paleface chief?"

"I am Job Robinson and these are my two sons," replied the trapper. "We live here in this cabin, an' fish an' hunt just as our red brothers do. We are as happy as the red men, an' love the Great Spirit."

"Ugh! Red men don't want palefaces here. The game belongs to the red man—palefaces must go away."

The chief looked stern, as if he believed his manner and words would overawe the palefaces.

"My red brother is mistaken. The Great Spirit made all

peoples—the red, white, black an' yellow men—and all the earth is his. The red man cannot drive us away."

The chief was astonished at the boldness of the old trapper's speech.

"Paleface heap big talk," he said. "The red men will take him to their village and make—ugh!"

The chief reached out and caught hold of Job Robinson as he spoke.

Job caught him by the wrist and gave his arm a twist that dislocated it at the shoulder.

The chief glared at him in dumfounded amazement. There was a look of intense pain in his face, but, Indian-like, he would suffer all the agonies of dissolution before he would let a groan escape his lips.

His braves saw that something was the matter and crowded around him, uttering short grunts.

The next moment he uttered a shrill war-whoop as a signal to his followers to attack the whites.

But ere the echo of his voice had died away in the forest three rifle shots had laid three of his warriors dead at his feet. Then, ere the smoke ceased issuing from the weapons, they crashed down on the unprotected heads of three more, sending them after the others to the happy hunting grounds.

Six down in a twinkling, and only three more warriors, besides the chief, left. Those three were adjusting arrows to their bows.

The three palefaces sprang forward and disarmed them so quickly that they didn't really know how it was done.

The chief grunted a big "ugh!" and glared at the three white men as if he thought them something more than human.

On finding themselves disarmed, the three warriors tried to get away from their captors. But they were quickly thrown to the ground, and a foot placed on their breast held them secure.

"Does the Miami want peace or war?" old Robinson asked.

"Ugh!" grunted the chief, who had been a silent spectator of what had happened. "Palefaces great warriors. The Miamis would be their friends."

"Yer don't want any more fight, then?"

"Ugh! Miami great warrior, but paleface heap big chief."

"We don't want any trouble with the red man, but he must not trouble us. Yer see what a disaster has come on yer?"

"Ugh! Old Disaster!" grunted the chief, gazing at the old trapper in a way that showed he had heard that terrible name before.

"Yer have got it right, chief. I'm a disaster every time a redskin bucks agin me."

The young chief glared at the old trapper and shrugged his shoulder now and then as if in pain.

The three men on the ground did not attempt to move. They were as mere children in the hands of the palefaces, and were for once in their lives terrified.

That a paleface whom they had never seen before should speak their tongue as fluently as themselves seemed something akin to the supernatural. They could not understand it at all. Coupled with that fact was the wonderful prowess that had enabled the three palefaces to overcome ten warriors with such lightning rapidity.

No wonder they were willing to drop a hostile attitude which had only brought disaster to them.

As the chief spoke to the trapper Job Robinson turned to his dog and said:

"Take him if he moves, Perdicion," and then left the savage he had been holding down with his foot.

Perdicion very quietly stepped forward and seated himself alongside the prostrate redskin.

The Miami seemed to understand that a dog had been set to watch him, and all his heroic savage nature revolted at the idea.



He started to rise to his feet, but Perdition seized him by the throat and hurled him back to the ground.

The redskin, of course, resisted, and in a moment the worst combat of the day was going on.

Fortunately for Perdition the redskin was unarmed; but unfortunately for the warrior he was not inclined to obey the dog. Perdition was not a dog to be shaken off when he once got a grip on an enemy.

In five minutes the Miami warrior lay quiet as a log, and Perdition released his hold on his throat and looked up at his master in a way that plainly said:

"I've settled him."

"That ere dog is perdition on redskins," remarked Job, as he looked at the work of the faithful canine.

"Ugh!"

That was all the chief said.

But there was a world of meaning in it.

"The great chief may go home ter his people," said Job "an' tell 'em the palefaces are their friends."

Dan and Peter let the other two warriors up.

They looked sullen and cast furtive glances at their weapons, which had been wrenched from them.

The intense agony of the dislocated shoulder caused great drops of perspiration to trickle down the face of the young chief. Job looked at him a moment or two and said:

"Let me fix yer arm, chief."

He took the chief's hand and arm and gave him a twist and a wrench that wrung a groan from him, in spite of his Indian stoicism. But the shoulder joint popped back into the socket with a snap that was heard by all of the party.

"Ther, now," said Job, with a broad grin on his bearded and bronzed face. "Yer can scalp an' shoot as well as yer ever did. Be off with you, now, an' let palefaces alone."

The redskins needed no second bidding, but went at once.

They went back to their canoe and rowed across the river.

"They'll bring ther whole war party over hyer ter-night," said Job, "an' we may as well prepare ter sleep downstairs again."

"Yes," said Dan; "thar's a big war party over thar. They won't rest till they have avenged the work we've done for 'em."

They went into the cabin and very quietly removed everything they cared to keep to the cavern under the bluff.

Then they ate a hearty supper, after which they lighted their pipes and sat before the cabin door to enjoy the luxury of a smoke.

Just as the sun was disappearing below the horizon four large canoes came in sight, coming up the river.

A quarter of a mile below them four more hove in sight. Each contained at least half a score of Miamis.

"Now, we'll have a red-hot disaster," said old Job. "Perdition, my boy, yer kin have all yer want ter eat ter-night, but I don't want yer ter be eatin' arrows. They ain't good for folks nor dogs."

The three men watched the redskins as they came up the river, and saw the young chief whose life they had spared pointing toward them from the foremost canoe.

"That shows a redskin ain't got no gratitude," said Job, as he watched the movements of the young chief.

They landed precisely at the same spot the others did, and started up the hill on a run.

Three sharp cracks from the rifles laid three of them in the dust, after which the three men and the dog retired into the cabin and closed the door.

The Miamis surrounded the cabin at once and danced and yelled like so many savage lunatics, in anticipation of an easy victory.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE TRAPPERS TRICK THE MIAMIS—THE FLOATING LIMBS.

The three whites inside the cabin did not long remain idle. They reloaded their rifles and removed pegs from three auger holes in the logs. The muzzles of the rifles were pushed through and three sharp reports followed. Such men never wasted any powder and ball, and the consequence was that three more paid the penalty of their temerity.

"That's six of ther pesky varmints," said Job, reloading his weapon. "If ther sun would hold up we'd soon make 'em sick of this.."

Three more shots quickly followed, and as many Miamis went down.

Then came yells of rage from the savages. They rushed in a body to the door of the cabin and tried to break it in by main force. But it was too solid and strong for that. It resisted all their efforts in that direction. Then they began hacking it with their tomahawks, making the welkin ring with their shouts the while.

Suddenly three flashes right in their faces from the solid surface of the door startled them, and three more went down with bullets in their heads.

"That's a dozen," said Dan Robinson, as he reloaded his rifle, "an' we ain't even mad yet."

"Ther disaster ain't come yit," remarked the old man.

They drew out three more pegs and gave them another volley.

The howls increased with each volley, and the hacking on the door was redoubled. The redskins knew there were but three palefaces in the cabin, while they numbered at least seventy-five warriors. To capture or destroy them seemed but a question of time.

But at each shot a red man went down, and three shots at a time made the loss count up rapidly.

At last, when about a score of Miamis had been killed, the chief, in amazement at the terrible destruction of his warriors, called them off for a council of war.

"Good-by!" called out Job Robinson, in the Miami tongue. "Come an' see 'Old Disaster' again."

The redskins did not know what their losses had been until they looked back from the cover of the bushes and saw their dead lying thick around the cabin. Then they howled again and vowed vengeance to the last extremity.

The gathering twilight soon hid them from view and a long silence followed.

"They're up ter mischief, boys," said Job Robinson. "They don't like them disasters, an' ain't goin' ter have no more if they kin help it. Perdition, old boy, yer won't have no hand in this, but yer may have a tooth in yet. Who knows?" and he patted the faithful dog on the head as he spoke.

"Look, father!" called Dan. "They're shootin' fire arrows!"

The old man applied his eyes to one of the holes and saw that what his son had said was true.

The whole band had tied bunches of dry fagots to their arrows, and, setting fire to them, shot them against the cabin, where they stuck. At least half a hundred blazing arrows struck the cabin at one time, two-thirds of them continuing to burn after finding a lodgment.

"That'll burn us out," said Job. "Thar's too many torches for us."

Pretty soon another shower of blazing arrows came and the roof and side of the cabin was stuck full of them.

In a little while the cabin was on fire, and then the yelling savages surrounded it to prevent the escape of the inmates. High and higher the flames reached until the light enabled



the three white men to see the forms of the redskins. Then they gave a parting shot that sent three more of the red rascals to their long home.

After that they retired through the trap-door and into the passage that led to the cavern below. Job Robinson himself adjusted the flat stone over the place so that no fire could follow them.

The redskins whooped and howled as the flames increased, expecting every moment to see the doomed whites make a dash for their lives. They held their tomahawks ready to brain them the moment they appeared.

But as the fire progressed and nothing was seen or heard of the three men, the savages wondered at the stoical courage that enabled them to sit down and be roasted alive without so much as opening the door to look out. They could not understand such courage as that, and so they stood in silent awe as they saw the cabin reduced to a pile of red glowing coals.

"Palefaces heap big braves," said the chief. "They know how to die like brave warriors."

They little knew how the three whites were resting quietly down in the cavern underneath the burning cabin.

The Indians encamped there all night, having a scalp-dance over the victory they had gained over "Old Disaster," whose death would relieve the fears of many a redskin along the mighty river.

They buried their dead after their custom, and the next morning started out on their return down the river, feeling satisfied with their dearly bought victory over "Old Disaster" and his two sons.

As soon as they were gone Job Robinson came out of the cavern on the water side by means of his canoe and inspected the ruins.

"Ha—ha—ha!" he chuckled, "they think they've roasted us alive, but they didn't. We'll show 'em another disaster afore we git done with 'em, the pesky varmints."

The three men took axes and proceeded to rebuild their home. Such men, each with a heavy ax, soon made chips fly in every direction. In three days they had another cabin, precisely like the first one, standing over the trap door that led below the bluff.

Then everything about the place assumed the same quiet aspect as before, and the old trapper and his dog sat in front of the cabin door as if nothing had ever occurred to mar the serenity of their lives.

But a week after the completion of the cabin Daniel Robinson discovered that Black Wolf, the Miami chief, with fifty of his warriors, was encamped about ten miles above the cabin to intercept a band of Mingoes who were to cross the river near that point.

"We owe 'em a grudge, father," said Dan, "an' now's ther time to pay 'em."

"That's a fact," said Job. "We'll go up thar an' see if we kin settle up with 'em."

They set out that afternoon and reached the vicinity of the Miami camp a little after sunset. They found them encamped near the river, with their canoes drawn up on the bank, with one young warrior as a guard to watch over them.

"We must turn them canoes loose," said old Job to his two boys, as he took in the situation.

They waited for the mantle of darkness to give them better protection, and when the stars came out, and before the moon rose, proceeded to put their scheme into active operation.

Under the cover of darkness they crept upon the unsuspecting guard and dispatched him before he had a chance to give the alarm. They then quickly shoved the canoes out into the river, where the current soon carried them down stream.

This done, they went to the other side of the camp to watch the result of their work. They saw the Miamis were too nu-

merous for them to attack, for a half hundred arrows sent in their direction would be very dangerous to them.

While thus waiting the full moon arose, sending a flood of light over the silvery bosom of the great river. The scene was beautiful to look upon and our heroes were not insensible to its charm. But the presence of the red demons prevented them from enjoying it as they otherwise would have done.

Suddenly a black cloud obscured the moon's rays and low, muttering thunder was heard. The cloud increased and vivid flashes of lightning lit up the scene. Our heroes moved back up the river about a mile to get the benefit of a huge shelving rock, under which they could find shelter.

They had scarcely reached the shelter ere a flash and thunderbolt struck a huge tree a score of yards away, tearing it literally to pieces. Then came a deluge of rain, which lasted about a half hour.

The rain ceased and the moon came out from behind the clouds, making millions of raindrops clinging to the leaves appear like so many pendant diamonds.

"I've got an idee, boys," said old Job to his two sons, "an' it's just the thing to fool them pesky Miamis with."

"What is it, father?" Peter asked.

"See them limbs out thar?" said the old man, pointing to several huge limbs which the lightning had torn from the tree a few minutes before.

"Yes," said both boys together.

"Well, if we each take a limb an' float down the river past the Injun camp, they'll swim out ter see what it is. We kin tie our knives ter poles an' reach 'em under the water, an' they won't know how it was."

"Just the thing, father!" exclaimed young Dan, who saw what splendid advantage it would give them over the redskins.

They set to work at once cutting poles six feet long, to which they tied their hunting-knives.

Then they dragged three of the largest limbs to the water's edge and pushed them out into the river, having first concealed their rifles and powder under the shelving rock which had afforded them protection from the storm.

By dint of swimming and pushing they succeeded in getting the limbs, still thickly studded with green leaves, out into the middle of the stream. Then they quietly drifted with the current, and in a little while came opposite the camp of the Miamis. The redskins had discovered the loss of their canoes, and were in a state of howling excitement over it.

Job Robinson shook his limb so as to make the impression on the savage mind that something alive was fastened to it. The motions could be seen in the clear moonlight. A half a dozen arrows were sent whizzing through the foliage of the limb, but the trappers took good care to keep their heads behind the body of the limb.

No Indian could resist the temptation to swim out to the limbs and see what was attached to them. They really suspected that Mingo warriors were mixed up in the matter some way, but just how was what they wanted to find out.

A dozen Miamis plunged into the water and began swimming out toward the floating limbs, while half a hundred others ran along the banks to look on. They were bold swimmers and pushed rapidly out into the stream, their savage head-dresses of eagle feathers giving them a formidable appearance.

They swam one behind another, going in a line like geese. The foremost one reached the limb held by young Dan Robinson and had caught hold of it when he felt a sharp pain in his vitals as the keen-edged hunting-knife passed clear through his body.

"Ugh!" he grunted, but, not seeing any enemy, he did not



utter any war-hoop. In another minute he was too weak even to swim and he sank out of sight.

Then Peter gave one a thrust that caught him under the fifth rib and passed through him, and another grunt followed.

Still they had not seen an enemy, and the others behind them only believed that some trifling incident had caused the grunts.

Nearly at the same instant that Peter struck a warrior old Job gave one a thrust that sent him to the happy hunting ground. Perdicion was swimming alongside of him so close under the leaves that his presence was not even suspected.

As each warrior came up he got a death wound without seeing whence it came. But one of them gave a whoop that told those on shore that an enemy was about. An answering yell came back, and a dozen more warriors plunged into the river to swim out to the assistance of their comrades.

"It's a disaster, Perdicion," said Job Robinson to his dog, "an' ther pesky varmints don't know it."

The dog licked his master's hand and swam quietly under the green foliage of the floating limb, keeping his eyes on the dozen savages who were swimming with such bold strokes toward them.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE END OF THE FIGHT IN THE RIVER—OLD DISASTER RETURNS TO HIS CABIN.

The Miamis were excited to the highest pitch and swam out as fast as they could, each carrying his scalping-knife and tomahawk ready for a hand-to-hand fight with whomever they could find in the floating bushes. They came close together, eagerly watching everything and calling to those who had gone out before them. They were suspicious as they came up to the bushes, and swam around very cautiously.

They struck old Job's limb first, and looked all around it in search of an enemy. But the wily old trapper kept his head hid under a thick cluster of leaves, whence he could see every movement of theirs without being seen himself.

Four of them suddenly swam at the tree.

Job Robinson let go, and, seizing the pole with both hands, gave each one a prod in rapid succession.

Howls of rage and terror escaped them, and they sank.

Dan and Peter also had several to contend with, and succeeded equally as well as their father in disposing of them. But their yells told those on shore that they were engaged in a desperate battle in the water.

No Indian could resist the temptation to go out to their assistance. The chief and all his braves plunged into the river and began to swim out toward the floating limbs.

"Ther whole tribe is comin'," said old Job, as he saw some two score heads with eagle feather decorations bobbing up and down in the water.

"Yes," said Dan; "we'll have ter be careful or we'll git a tomahawk."

"Don't let 'em catch yer pole, boys," said the old man, "or they'll find us out an' give us no chance. We can't swim away from 'em."

The yelling savages came forward almost abreast, but stopped when within twenty yards of the bushes to wonder where the others who came out ahead of them were.

Suddenly one of them caught sight of Perdicion as he swam alongside his master. He did not recognize him at first, and so swam forward to get a better view of him. He soon made out that it was a dog and grunted:

"Ugh! Dog!" and made a few bold strokes which brought him within a few feet of the sagacious dog. As he was about

to raise his tomahawk to brain the dog he felt the keen-blade hunting-knife.

He gave a yell.

The others yelled in unison and swam forward to his assistance.

Then the old trapper gave thrust after thrust in such rapid succession that a half dozen savages yelled out in as many seconds and the excitement grew to fever heat among them.

They made the welkin ring with their shouts, and some of them even struck down into the water with their tomahawks. But as the thrusts continued they laid the whole trouble to the dog, as he was all the enemy that had so far been seen. They made a rush for the dog, and Job Robinson, to save him from being brained, had to show himself and make a terrible battle scene then and there.

The Miamis yelled like so many lunatics, and tried to get at him with their knives and tomahawks, but he kept them at bay with the knife on the pole.

At last one of the warriors recognized him as "Old Disaster," whom they thought had been destroyed in the cabin they had burned down over his head.

"Ugh!" he grunted. "Old Disaster—not dead—him here!"

Then another yell of dismay burst from the dumfounded savages. They believed that the spirit of "Old Disaster" was in the water carving them with a merciless ferocity. They turned to swim away, but "Disaster," who understood what had been said in the Miami tongue, swam after them, hurling the knife at them as fast as he could.

"Come, boys," he cried to his two sons. "Cut 'em up! They are runnin' away! Take 'em, Perdicion!"

With a yell the two boys went after the now panicstricken redskins. Perdicion gave a fierce growl and seized one of them by the throat. When an Indian starts to run all fight is out of him. He thinks of but one thing, and that is that he has been whipped and must get away if he would save his hair.

The three trappers followed them to the shore and saw them land and make off into the woods without once looking back to see if there were any chance for them to turn the tide of defeat.

Then they landed also and laughed, for not one of them had received a scratch.

"That was a bad disaster, eh, Perdicion?" said Job Robinson to the dog the moment they were out of the water.

Perdicion gave an affirmative wag of his tail and looked in the direction the Indians had gone.

"We must get our guns, father," said Dan.

"Yes," was the reply, and they set off up the river to walk three miles through the woods to the shelter where they had left their rifles and ammunition concealed. They soon reached the spot and found their weapons all right.

"Them redskins won't forgit this night soon," said the old trapper, as he examined his rifle to make sure it had not been tampered with in his absence.

"No; it was a bad night for 'em," said Peter, very quietly.

"Yes; it was a bad disaster. Come, let's go home; they might strike ther cabin an' burn it ag'in."

They made their way back toward their little cabin on the bluff, and on the way discovered that a number of redskins were scattered about through the woods in a most demoralized condition. Not one of them would have been seen, however, but for Perdicion. The dog could smell an Indian a quarter of a mile, and he never let slip an opportunity to announce the fact when he sniffed one.

He kept close to his master's feet, sometimes before and sometimes behind him. When a low, warning growl would escape him old Job knew that an enemy lurked near.

"What is it, boy?" he would ask when the dog growled,



redskin or catamount?" and the dog's actions would generally give him the information he wanted.

But on the way back home on that eventful night two Indian dogs rushed through the bushes and attacked him.

The moonlight was sufficient to enable the three hunters to see that they were only Indian dogs, and so they stopped to see him dispose of them.

Perdition was worthy of his name. He had fought bears, panthers and catamounts till dogs were as kittens to him.

He seized one of the curs and slung him nearly ten feet into the bushes, and then paid his respects to the other.

Just then a party of four Miamis rushed forward to the assistance of their curs, and one of them was about to brain the gallant dog when he felt a foot on his breech-clout that lifted him higher than he had ever leaped in all his life.

When he gained his footing again he looked around and found himself face to face with Old Disaster.

"Ugh! paleface!" he grunted, raising his tomahawk to strike.

But the next moment he felt himself kicked again, as Dan gave him one, and the blow sent him headlong against the old trapper.

Whack! went Old Disaster's fist in his face, and down he fell.

It was all done before the other three could get mixed up in it.

No sooner was he down than the other three had a circus on their hands, for Dan, Peter and Old Disaster laid them out without any ceremony, and then went on their way.

The Miamis were too much demoralized to have any fight left in them after the disastrous adventure on the river. They had come there to intercept a band of Mingoes who they knew would cross at that point. But now they were anxious to get away before the expected Mingoes showed up, for their ranks were too much decimated for a battle to profit them anything about that time.

Old Disaster and his two boys returned to their cabin and soon after went to bed in their blankets.

In the night the old man thought he heard a low growl from Perdition, who was lying near the door. He listened, and, hearing it continued, asked in a low voice:

"What is it, boy?"

Perdition ran up to him and licked his hand. Then he pulled his sleeve and ran back to the door.

Old Disaster arose and went to the door and listened.

He heard the soft voice of an Indian girl talking just outside.

But no one responded to her talk, and in a little while the old man concluded she was alone.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MIAMI MAIDEN—MINGOES ATTACK THE CABIN—THE DESPERATE DEFENSE.

Old Disaster stood by the door as silent as a statue listening to the voice outside. The words were low and soft and the language that of a Miami girl. He caught a few of her words, but not enough to make out what she was saying. The whole proceeding was so strange, however, that he did not know what to make of it.

At last he stepped softly over to where Dan and Peter lay slumbering in their blankets and touched them with his foot. That was enough.

They were light sleepers and sprang up without making any noise.

"What is it, father?" Dan asked.

"Injun gal outside," replied the old man, in a whisper.

"What does she want?"

"Don't know. Mebbe it's a trick."

"Yes—look out."

"I'm goin' ter," and he tripped softly back to the door to listen again.

Dan and Peter crept all round the room and drew out pegs so as to peep through the holes. They could see nobody outside.

"Reckon she's alone, father," said the eldest son creeping up to his father's side.

"I'm goin' ter see," and the old man opened the door and looked out.

As he did so the girl sprang to her feet, for she had been sitting on the block in front of the cabin.

She seemed dumfounded at seeing him there.

"Why is the Miami maiden alone an' away from her people?" he asked, in her native tongue.

She looked up at him, as if to make sure who or what he was. As he stood in the shadow of the door she could not see his face. In the bright moonlight she was a beautiful picture to look upon—tall, graceful and willowy, and apparently about eighteen years of age.

"I am a paleface," said the old trapper, seeing how she hesitated to speak, "and a friend of the red man. You have nothing to fear," and he stepped out into the moonlight so she could see him.

She looked at him in wonder and surprise; she had never seen but two or three white men before, and they were miserable renegades whose physical ugliness was in keeping with their moral character.

The dignified bearing of the old trapper impressed her at once, and she answered:

"Lau-too-na is not afraid. She is the daughter of the great Miami chief. She is glad the paleface has spoken. She believes his words."

"Lau-too-na is welcome to the paleface's cabin," said the old man. "She has not told why she is so far from her people, and alone."

Dan and Peter stepped out into the moonlight, and the beautiful maiden looked at them in evident admiration. Their demeanor was so respectful that it impressed her as something wonderful in man.

"My father, the great chief," she said, "went over the river with his warriors, and Black Wolf, Mingo chief, come and burn the village and take Lau-too-na away to make her his squaw. Lau-too-na run away and go hunt her father. Lau-too-na is lost and very tired."

"Ah! The paleface's heart is touched," said the old man. "He and his sons, who are great warriors, will take care of Lau-too-na and help her find her father."

"Lau-too-na's heart is glad!" exclaimed the girl, placing her hand in that of the old hunter.

"Dan, strike a light," said Old Disaster to his son, and in another moment the young hunter was busy with his tinder-box working for a light.

In a little while a light was struck and a rude lamp, made of a stone vessel, with bear's grease and yarn for a wick, was lighted.

Then she was led inside the cabin and given a seat, while a supper of venison steak was prepared for her. She ate ravenously, and seemed so grateful for it that all three were pleased at doing so much for her.

Old Disaster talked with her for a long time, and ascertained that Black Wolf, the Mingo chief, had attacked Standing Bear's village and made all the young women prisoners, and that she had escaped and was trying to make her way over the river for the purpose of finding her father or some of the bands of Miami warriors, so they could hasten back to avenge the wrong.



When she had eaten as much as she desired Old Disaster placed a big bearskin robe on the floor in a corner of the room for her to lie on. She was both tired and sleepy, having been wandering three days and nights in the woods, and took possession of it with the eagerness of a child.

The old man then spread his own blanket against the door so that it could not be opened without touching him, and in a little while they were all asleep again.

When they arose in the morning the Miami maiden was still soundly sleeping. She was evidently very tired from her wandering in the woods.

They went down into the cavern under the cabin and cooked a breakfast of venison steak and fish. When it was ready to be eaten she was still sleeping.

"Let her sleep," said the old trapper. "She's tired an'—but thar! She is wakin' up now."

She arose to a sitting posture and rubbed her great black eyes, and looked around at the three bronze-featured men who were looking at her so intently.

Then she turned to Dan and Peter and gave each of them a smile, which they returned with bows.

"The Miami maiden has slept long an' well," said Old Disaster, in her native tongue.

"I have slept," she said. "My heart and feet are both light. The paleface is Lau-too-na's friend. She will not forget them. She will tell her father, the great chief."

"I am glad Lau-too-na's heart is glad and light. Her eyes are as bright as the stars. But she must eat or she may be hungry again," and the old man placed the tempting slices of venison and broiled fish before her.

She ate heartily and seemed to relish the food.

While she was eating Perdition sprang up and rushed to the door. Dan jumped to his feet in time to close the door and fasten it just as a band of Mingo warriors closed around the cabin.

"Mingoes! Mingoes!" cried the girl, springing to her feet in the greatest alarm.

"Let the maiden be not afraid," said Old Disaster, very coolly. "The Mingoes shall not have her. The palefaces will take care of her."

"Lau-too-na is not afraid," she replied. "The great white chief has spoken."

The Mingoes knocked on the door and demanded that it be opened to them.

"What do the Mingoes want hyar?" Old Disaster asked.

"Black Wolf wants the Indian maiden," replied the Mingo chief.

The girl heard it, and springing to her feet gazed at Old Disaster to hear his answer.

"Black Wolf is a coward. He shall not have the maiden. I will return her to her father, the great Miami chief."

That was his answer.

Lau-too-na seized his hand and kissed it.

"Black Wolf will take the paleface's scalp and burn his cabin," said the Mingo chief.

"Black Wolf is a coward," said the old trapper. "He had better go back to his village and learn how to behave himself."

For answer they began hacking the heavy oaken door with their tomahawks.

Old Disaster turned to his two sons and said:

"They want a disaster, I reckon."

"Yes, father," said Dan, "let's give it to 'em."

They took their rifles and drew the pegs from the door.

Three sharp cracks sounded and three Mingo warriors uttered death yells.

The maiden, who had never heard firearms before, sprang to her feet in the greatest alarm. Half the Mingo warriors were

equally alarmed and wondered how their comrades got their death wounds.

But they continued their hacking on the door, making the welkin ring with their shouts and yells.

Three more shots and three more death yells followed.

The four-score or more warriors were not dismayed by the death of six of their number. They believed in a little while they could cut down the door. But in those days their tomahawks were made of flint and not steel. They were not so dangerous to wood as to human heads. They made slow progress; but not so in the cabin.

The three hunters loaded and fired in rapid succession, bringing down a warrior at every shot, till after a while the pile of dead or dying began to make Black Wolf think that he was paying very dearly for his prize.

He yelled to his warriors to redouble their efforts, and they continued to hack away for dear life. The steady fire of the deadly rifles continued also, and kept piling up the dead.

Suddenly the warriors uttered yells of dismay and fled to the woods back from the river.

"That's a disaster," said the old trapper, "an' a bad one, too, or my name is not Job Robinson. Hyer, gal—look!" and he drew out a peg from the wall so as to give her a chance to peep through at the retreating Mingoes.

She looked, and was almost beside herself with delight.

"Paleface great chief," she said. "Black Wolf run away from before him."

But Black Wolf had not run away for good. He and his warriors had only sought shelter in the woods to gain time and count up the losses sustained so far. The count appalled him and them. He could not persuade them to attack the cabin again at close quarters. They had had enough of that.

Their refuge was fire arrows.

They fell back on them, and in less than an hour's time the burning arrows were whizzing through the air and lodging on the cabin roof. But the cabin had not been built ten days and the wood was not yet dry enough to burn from little wisps of straw. Besides, the heavy rain the night before had left everything wet.

"It won't burn, Mr. Mingo," said Old Disaster, with a dry chuckle. "Yer must cover it with dry wood if yer want a good, hot fire, an' if yer do that I'll have something ter say about it."

The Mingoes continued to shoot burning arrows at the cabin for several hours, during which time they lost nearly a dozen warriors by the death-dealing rifles of the trappers.

At last they seemed discouraged, and called a council of war. Our heroes could see them as they discussed the situation. They kept out of range of the rifles during the time. When they broke up they scattered through the woods and began gathering armfuls of dry fagots.

"Ah! They are goin' ter try it, eh? Wal, it'll be a disaster, sure," said the old hunter. "Boys, git yer other guns, an' we'll lay out six of 'em afore they kin git away."

Peter raised the trap-door and disappeared below, to the great astonishment of the Indian maiden. But as soon as he returned bringing three more rifles with him, she seemed to think they had simply been hidden under the rude floor of the cabin until wanted.

"Now, let 'em come on," said the old man, taking one of the rifles and standing it against the wall at his side.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE MINGOES ARE DEFEATED AND GIVE UP THE FIGHT.

A pause of nearly a half hour followed.

The Mingoes were deliberating over the risk they were about to run.

They knew that three, if not six, of their number would be



slain, and each warrior wondered if he would be one to fall. At last the chief gave a wild whoop, and the band, now reduced to about fifty or sixty braves, dashed toward the cabin, each carrying an armful of dry fagots.

Crack! crack! crack!

Three warriors fell forward ere they reached half way.

The others yelled like so many tigers and dashed on.

Just as they reached the cabin three more rifle shots laid out as many warriors.

Then the others fled back to the shelter of the woods as fast as their legs could carry them.

No sooner had they started on their return to the woods than Old Disaster opened the cabin door and darted outside. In a moment he was sending the wagonload of dry fagots flying in every direction, kicking them right and left. Not one was left resting against the cabin.

A yell burst from the savages when they saw what he was doing, and they sprang for their bows. But before they could send an arrow he was back in the cabin again.

"They've caught a disaster, boys," said the old hunter, as he resumed his place at the side of the cabin to watch the movements of the enemy.

The savages were terribly disappointed. They had gathered the fagots at the cost of six warriors, and to repeat the operation at the same price was more than they cared to invest.

They sent one of their warriors to say that they would go away and not trouble them any more if the palefaces would give up the Miami maiden.

"When yer git her yer kin have our ha'r with her, Mingo," said Old Disaster. "But I reckon yer won't git nothin' but a disaster."

The Mingo then resolved to make another rush with dry fagots, leaving ten warriors back with bows and arrows to prevent any attempt to displace the dry brush.

They accordingly began gathering fagots again, and when they were ready to make the rush ten warriors were stationed with bows and arrows to prevent the fagots from being removed.

"Thar's goin' ter be a disaster," said the old man, as he saw the plans of the enemy. "I'm goin' ter kick them sticks away in spite of 'em."

"Don't go out thar, father," said Dan; "yer may git an arrow."

"I ain't goin' ter let 'em burn us out," said the old man. "We'll lay out six of them with the bows and let the others be. Four of 'em can't do much so far off. Hyer they come!"

The Mingo made a gallant rush, and three sharp reports of the rifles brought out as many death yells from those who were standing with their bows ready to send arrows after the bold paleface should he appear again.

As the band ran back three more shots brought down three more guards, leaving only four warriors with bows and arrows in their hands.

Then Old Disaster darted out of the cabin and sent the fagots flying.

Four arrows came uncomfortably close to him, lodging in the house just behind him. Ere the savages could adjust more arrows to their bows Old Disaster was back again in the cabin unharmed.

A wild howl of disappointment went up from the savages.

They had lost six more braves, and still they were as far from success as when they begun the siege.

"Paleface great chief," said the Miami maiden. "Mingo go away now. He lose many warriors."

"Yes; a bad disaster for 'em," replied the old man.

The girl was delighted, and ran from one to the other, kissing their hands in her joy.

They were pleased at her manifestations of gratitude and said many pleasant things to her.

In the meantime a heavy black cloud overcast the sky, and in a little while big drops of rain began to fall.

"They never move or do anything in a rain," said Old Disaster. "We had better git them fagots in for firewood."

The two young men agreed, and they began gathering armfuls of the fagots to pile up in a corner of the cabin. As soon as she saw what they were doing the Miami girl joined them, and none carried in larger armfuls than she did.

When they had as much as they cared to pile up in the cabin they began throwing them down through the trap-door into the cavern below. In an hour's time all the fagots were gone and the place was as before, save the number of dead Mingo lying round the yard. The storm continued furious for some time after the fagots were removed, and Old Disaster suggested that they throw the dead over the bluff into the river.

That was soon done, and the scalping-knives, tomahawks, bows and arrows of the dead warriors were piled up in a corner of the cabin as trophies of the victory.

By and by the clouds cleared away and the sun came out again. Then the Mingo came back to get their dead and renew the siege. But when they saw the dead had been removed, as well as the great heap of fagots, they were amazed beyond expression.

They stood and gazed at the cabin in silent wonder, for never before in their lives had they made such a failure. Then they went away, believing that the Great Spirit was angry with them for something or other.

The Miami maiden was almost beside herself with joy at her escape from the clutches of the Mingo chief, and declared that she would love the great white chief all her life.

That evening she insisted on being permitted to cook the supper for the palefaces. They showed her down into the cavern, where they had enough provisions stored to last them a year. Such providence amazed her. She had never seen anything like it before, and was profuse in her praise of everything she saw.

The next morning Dan went out to scout through the woods to see if any Indians remained in the vicinity. He soon came back to report that neither Mingo nor Miami could be found anywhere in the neighborhood.

"I will go with you in search of your father, the great Miami chief," said Old Disaster, during the day, but she did not seem to care anything about going, as she made no reply.

On the next morning he told her to get ready and he would go with her. She looked up at him and in a pleading voice said:

"Let Lau-too-na stay here. She will cook paleface's meals and be happy if he smiles upon her."

"But Standing Bear will miss his beautiful Lau-too-na when he returns to his village," said Old Disaster, "and his great heart will be sad."

"Lau-too-na's heart will be sad, too, if she goes away from the palefaces," she replied.

"We must see Standing Bear, an' if he says Lau-too-na can stay in the cabin of the palefaces, she can do so. The palefaces will be glad to have her with them."

A smile of supreme satisfaction illuminated her face as she heard his words and she sprang up to prepare to accompany him.

"She wants to stay hyer," said Old Disaster to Dan and Peter. "But we must send her home, or thar'll be no end of trouble with ther Miamis. She is a chief's daughter, an' the tribe would be down on us if we kept her hyer. Take care of ther cabin till I come back. I'll find her father and turn her over to him."



Thus saying, Old Disaster, accompanied by Perdition and the maiden, started out across the river. The girl was armed with a knife, tomahawk and bow and arrows.

She seemed in the best of spirits and laughed and chatted in her native tongue like a happy child.

On the Kentucky side of the river Old Disaster hid the canoe in the bushes and started out in search of the band under Standing Bear. They were hunting somewhere in the great forest, and the bold trapper made up his mind that he ran little risk in boldly searching him out.

He knew that the girl's story would insure him kind treatment at the hands of the fierce old warrior, as the savages had soft spots in their hearts sometimes where their children were concerned.

They had been traveling the greater part of the day when they saw a few Indian hunters chasing a deer.

"There they are," said the girl, as she caught sight of the hunters.

They pushed on to overtake them, but made the mistake of thinking they were Miamis. They were Mingoes, and part of the band of Black Wolf.

Old Disaster tried to get her away. He could have saved himself had he been willing to leave her to her enemies, but he was not that kind of a man. He shot down one warrior as they crowded around him, and then clubbed his rifle and spread disaster all around him.

## CHAPTER VII.

### OLD DISASTER A CAPTIVE.

As the Mingoes closed around him Old Disaster knocked half a dozen into the happy hunting grounds in less than as many seconds. Then they sprang upon him and bore him to the ground.

A dozen men on him at once was too much, even though Perdition bit and tore like a tiger.

The moment he saw that he was overpowered Old Disaster called out to Perdition:

"Go home, Perdition, an' tell ther boys!"

The dog made a break and got away just as a half-dozen savages were preparing to put as many arrows through him. He was out of sight in a moment, going so fast that the warriors, who did not understand the dog's mission, burst into a roar of laughter and called the dog a paleface coward.

Seeing her brave protector overpowered before her eyes, the Miami maiden stood like one dazed for a minute or two. Then, as she saw him disarmed and bound, she raised her bow and sent an arrow through the body of one of the warriors.

The Mingoes were dumfounded.

They howled for vengeance and Black Wolf ordered her to be disarmed and bound also.

They made a rush at her.

She sent another arrow, which found lodgment in the breast of another Mingo warrior, who fell almost at her feet.

No further resistance was made, and she was immediately disarmed and led to the camp, a mile away.

This sudden capture of the cause of all their woes filled the Mingoes with untold joy.

They yelled and danced like so many lunatics in their mad delight.

The march back to camp was one wild scene of savage joy. All the other hunters came in, attracted to the spot, and joined in the rejoicing when they saw who had been captured.

Black Wolf came up to him and said:

"Black Wolf got paleface now. Burn him at stake. Black Wolf great chief."

"Black Wolf great coward," sneered Old Disaster. "I can whip him with my hands tied behind my back."

"Black Wolf got paleface now," repeated the chief. "Miami maiden be his wife now. Paleface burn at stake."

"Oh, I don't care for Black Wolf nor his fire. He is a coward."

The chief continued to bandy words with him and taunt him, till at last the old trapper would make no reply to him. The chief, angered at being thus ignored, slapped his face, whereupon Old Disaster raised his foot and gave him a kick that sent him rolling on the ground, too sick to speak for several minutes.

The other warriors laughed at the chief's mishaps, for they have no sympathy for one another under such circumstances.

The chief was so enraged at his discomfiture that he again menaced the prisoner with his tomahawk as soon as he was able to stand on his feet. He circled around him, making passes at him as if trying to make believe he was going to brain him.

Old Disaster watched his opportunity and gave him a kick that sent the tomahawk flying, and followed it up with another that laid the chief out at full length.

"Bah!" said the prisoner, "Black Wolf couldn't fight a squaw. He is a coward."

The chief was too sick to fool with him any more, and the other warriors did not care to get a kick that might be the death of them.

Lau-too-na walked along with her hands bound, but her head was erect as she gazed at the palefaced prisoner. She evidently expected to see him do something every moment that would release both him and herself.

But nothing more occurred on the way back to the camp, and in a little while they reached there.

Such rejoicing was never seen in an Indian camp before.

They were amply repaid for their terrible losses now that they had the author of their defeat in their power. They would have a grand burning when they returned to their villages, and the daughter of Standing Bear should cook supper for Black Wolf in his wigwam.

Old Disaster looked upon their extravagant actions with a contemptuous sneer and made but few replies to their taunts. He knew that they would burn him at the stake if he did not get away from them, as he had been a thorn in their side for a long time. That he would get away he did not doubt, for Dan, Peter and Perdition would soon be on their trail.

"If they don't give 'em a disaster," he said to himself, as they were tying him to a tree near the camp-fire, "I don't know them boys. They'll make 'em sick, an' when they make 'em sick it's as bad as a disaster."

That night they danced and sang around him, saying in their songs what they were going to do with him when they returned to their villages on the north side of the Ohio river.

To all that he merely laughed.

"Paleface won't laugh when the red fire scorches him," said Black Wolf.

"The red fire won't scorch me," said Old Disaster. "The Mingo is not goin' ter burn me. I will live ter scalp Black Wolf yet."

"Heap big talk now," said the chief, shaking his head.

"Oh, no. Black Wolf can't see into the future, but I can. I shall live to scalp Black Wolf."

The wily chief glared at him as if tempted to tomahawk him then and there, to make sure that he could never have a chance to make good his threat.

But as he could not see how he could escape, he refrained, and the revelry went on. He turned his attention to Lau-too-na, who sat at the foot of a huge oak with her hands bound with deerskin thongs.

"The Miami maiden's face is sad," he said, "but when she is Black Wolf's wife she will smile again and be happy."



"Lau-too-na will not be Black Wolf's wife, for she is the daughter of a great chief and cannot mate with a coward."

"Black Wolf is no coward," said the chief, a black scowl on his dark face.

"Lau-too-na was in the cabin and saw three palefaces whip Black Wolf's whole band. The Mingoes are all cowards."

"But the paleface and Lau-too-na are both prisoners now," said the chief.

"The Mingoes could not take the cabin of the palefaces. They are cowards, and can't take but one paleface at a time."

"The maiden shall eat her words. She shall see what Mingo warriors can do," and the chief looked blacker than ever.

"How many Mingo warriors died before the palefaces' cabin?" she asked.

Black Wolf did not answer, but said that she would soon eat her words.

"How many Mingoes fell before the palefaces' cabin?" she asked again.

Again he ignored the question and tried to turn the conversation. But she would say nothing but just the words of that query.

At last, angered by her taunts, he arose and left her, going over to where a party of warriors were discussing the events of the day. She then resumed her occupation of gazing at the dauntless man who had performed greater feats before her eyes than the wildest bragging of savage brutes had ever equaled.

She never tired of looking at him, and he soon became conscious that he was her only thought and dream. But he saw that she had no thought of herself. She did not appear to think that she, too, would be doomed to a fate worse than death at the stake if he did not succeed in taking her away from the Mingoes. The night wore on, and the warriors prepared to sleep, one of their number being detailed to sit up and watch while they slumbered.

The Indian guard never paces a beat. He simply sits by the fire, where he watches and listens, and very often sleeps himself.

Old Disaster watched the guard, and then would glance at the maiden to see if she, too, were awake. As their eyes would meet he would give her an encouraging smile. Her eyes would brighten and a happy look beam all over her dusky face.

He could not help calculating the time it would take Perditi-  
tion to reach home, and how long it would be ere Dan and Peter would be on the trail. He did not believe that any time would be lost by them, but he knew that they could not follow the trail in the night.

"No," he thought to himself. "They can't reach hyer till to-morrow. They'll be on ther lookout ter-morrow night, an' then thar'll be a disaster. I'll have that Black Wolf's scalp if I lose mine in getting it. I won't leave the girl. She looks ter me ter save her, an' I'll do it if I kin."

The next morning the guard gave the captive some broiled venison to eat. But they would not untie his hands to let him have the use of them during the meal. They were afraid of him even when he was securely bound to a tree.

## CHAPTER VIII.

PERDITION RETURNS HOME FOR HELP—DAN AND PETER GO WITH HIM ON THE TRAIL.

Dan and Peter Robinson were seated in front of their cabin on the north bank of the Ohio late at night, smoking their pipes. They were talking in low tones of the beautiful Miami maiden whom their father was trying to restore to her people.

"I'll never say an Injun has no gratitude ag'in," said Peter, "for she was ther most grateful critter I ever did see."

"Yes," said Dan; "she was so grateful that I believe she would have been willing to stay here all her life if we'd let her."

"She would; an' I believe she is dead in love with ther old man, though he is old enough ter be her father."

"Just what I was thinkin'," remarked the other.

"Hark!"

They both listened.

Away over on the other side of the river they both heard the bark of a dog.

It came again.

"That's Perdition!" exclaimed Dan.

"Yes, I think it was his voice," said Peter; "but it was so far off I could not make sure. There it is again! Yes, that's Perdition. Father is coming back and the dog is greeting us from the other side."

They listened again, but did not hear the dog any more. They sat there waiting to see the canoe in which Old Disaster went across that morning. But, instead of the canoe, they saw something swimming through the water where the moon-beams glistened.

Both sprang to their feet and ran down to the water's edge to see what strange animal it was. The thing came boldly forward and emerged from the water almost at their feet, shaking the water off its coat very much like a dog.

"Dan, it's Perdition!" gasped Peter, the first to recognize his father's faithful companion.

"Yes, so it is!" returned Dan, as much surprised as his brother. "Perdition, where is father?"

Perdition gave a short bark and stood up on his hind feet and looked Dan wistfully in the face. Then he barked again and plunged into the water to swim back to the other side.

"Peter, father is in trouble," said Dan, "and the dog has come to tell us about it."

"Yes—we must go over and see about it. Here, Perdition. Come here!"

The dog came back and followed them up to the cabin. There they gave the dog a good supper and then began to prepare for a journey. They removed everything below except the fagots which had been piled up in the corner.

Everything being in readiness, they fastened the door and went down through the trap to the cavern, where they took a canoe and pushed out into the river.

Perdition leaped into the canoe with a sharp bark expressive of his satisfaction, and looked eagerly toward the other shore all the way across.

When they reached the other side the dog leaped out and ran forward without waiting for them to conceal the canoe. They had to call him back in order to get an idea which way they were to go.

Though the full moon was shining, they found it quite difficult to keep up with him under the somber shadows of the forest. Time and again did they call to him in order to know which way he had gone. The faithful dog never once deviated from the straight line his master had taken that morning.

But their progress was necessarily slow, and daylight found them still on the trail. Then they increased their speed and made much better time, till noon brought them to the spot where the Mingoes had camped with their prisoners the night before.

Dan and Peter then looked around and saw enough to convince them that Old Disaster was a pioneer in the hands of the Mingoes.

"They've got 'im, Peter," said Dan, after a silence of several minutes.

"Yes, Dan, they've got 'im; but he'll be a disaster to 'em in some way."

"Yes, I know that; but we must help 'im ter git away."



"We will, Dan, an' the dog, too."

They searched about till they found the trail of the band and then set out to follow it. It pointed north toward the Ohio river, and by that they knew that the Mingo were making for home with their prize.

"They'll cross the river before we can git thar," said Dan.

"Yes; but we can find the trail very easily in the morning."

"If they went straight over, but if they went up or down some distance we may lose a whole day in finding it."

"Wal, we'll see. Perdition can find father's trail among a thousand redskins' tracks."

"That's true. We can find it if they touch land again."

Night overtook them long before they reached the river, and then they had to fall back on the sagacity of the dog again. By the aid of the moon they could see the faithful animal occasionally as he followed the trail.

At midnight they struck the river, to find that the band had crossed over to the other side.

"We must stop here till morning," said Dan. "We want both rest and sleep, and when we have had that we can push on better than ever."

"Yes, for they are resting somewhar over thar," said Peter. "They won't gain any on us at this time of night."

They lay down on the banks of the river to sleep, and Perdition instinctively seemed to know that it was both right and proper to do so, for he lay down with his face to the river and was soon as soundly sleeping as his young masters.

The singing of the birds awoke them the next morning, and they were up ere the morning star had faded away. Eating a cold lunch they had brought with them, they cast about for some means of getting over the river.

The Indians had canoes concealed on both sides, and they only had to search to find one. But so many had crossed over at that point that they had gone fully four miles up the stream before they found one. Peter saw some tracks leading up from a thick cluster of bushes down by the water, and a search soon rewarded them with a fine birch canoe.

They took possession at once and rowed close to the bank till they struck the spot where the others had crossed. Then they pushed over on the other side and set Perdition to looking for the trail.

The dog seemed to know what was expected of him, for he ran in every direction with his nose close to the ground. But he suddenly ceased and showed fight.

Dan and Peter were watching him when an arrow whizzed close by them and lodged in a tree just above Dan's head. Both at once sprang for shelter.

At least a half dozen warriors appeared in sight, and as many arrows whizzed past them when they had gotten under shelter. But the two young hunters were not novices in woodcraft. They laid out two redskins and then quickly reloaded their rifles.

Two more exposed themselves and each caught a bullet, but not in a vital part. One of them sought shelter behind a log where Perdition had hidden himself. The dog knew that he and the redskin could not agree, and so he caught him by the throat. The redskin was already wounded and could make but little resistance to the fierce attack.

The combat was soon over and the dog crouched down behind the log to escape the arrows, having been taught to do so by Old Disaster.

The savages at last drew their tomahawks and made a rush on the two young hunters. There were five of them, and in a hand-to-hand contest would have the advantage.

Peter called to Perdition and the dog sprang forward to his aid. He was as good as one Indian at any time. As they closed in the death struggle the dog seized them by the legs

and so disconcerted them that the advantage was really on the side of Dan and Peter.

At last Dan clinched with a huge Mingo in a death grapple. Both held knives and they seemed well matched in strength.

But Dan was the more active of the two. He tripped the redskin and threw him heavily to the ground, stunning him for two or three minutes.

He took the opportunity to scalp him, though he was not otherwise hurt. As the scalplock was torn from his head the Mingo gave a shriek, for the pain is the most acute that can be inflicted.

Dan threw the scalplock in his face. The Mingo picked it up and looked sadly at it. All the spirit was out of him. He hadn't courage enough left even to look up at the paleface who had inflicted the disgrace upon him.

He gave a shudder and bowed his head between his knees, as if he thought life was no longer worth living.

Peter had sent his last assailant to the happy hunting grounds and now joined Dan, who was standing by and gazing at the scalped Mingo.

"Dan," said he, "why don't yer ask 'im whar the rest of ther band is? He may tell us now."

Dan looked at the disgraced savage and asked:

"Can ther Mingo tell us whar Black Wolf is?"

The Mingo made no answer.

"We can't get anything out of him. Come on. We must look for the trail."

They turned away from the disgraced savage and set Perdition to hunting for the trail again. The dog ran hither and thither with his nose within an inch of the ground for two hours or more. Then he gave a sudden, sharp bark and moved off in a northerly direction.

"Thar! thar's the trail!"

And so it was.

There had been no attempt to conceal the trail, for the whole band had trudged along as if they had nothing to fear from any one in all the wide world.

Having struck the trail, the two young hunters wasted no more time, as half the day had already been spent in finding it. They were afraid that another day would pass ere they could catch up with Black Wolf's band.

Perdition followed up the trail with unerring instinct and the two hunters followed him on the run. The trot was kept up till the sun went down and left them still on the chase. The moon gave them but little light because the forest was dense, and in places the gloom was of a pitchy darkness.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE ATTEMPT AT ESCAPE—FALL OF BLACK WOLF—LAU-TOO-NA'S ESCAPE.

We will now return to Old Disaster, whom we left in Black Wolf's power in his camp south of the Ohio river.

The next morning after his capture the band moved toward the river to return to their homes with their captives. Old Disaster knew that his two boys would follow him up and do all in their power to rescue him. But they reached the river in the middle of the afternoon and sent scouts up and down the banks in quest of canoes.

They soon gathered enough to put the band over, and on the other side they pushed forward about ten miles ere they stopped to camp.

Then they again sought to have some fun with their captive. While they were tying his feet to keep him safe for the night one of the warriors brought a stick which he had taken from the fire and stuck the burning end against his leg to see how well he could stand fire.

They expected to see him wince, if not cry out with pain.



But instead of that he raised his foot and tripped the warrior, who fell heavily to the ground. Ere he could get out of the way the captive gave him another kick on the neck that laid him over on his back, amid the laughter of the others. But as he did not rise, the others went to him and found that his neck was broken.

Then a howl for vengeance went up from the braves. The warrior just killed was one of their bravest fighters, and for him to perish thus was a disgrace the whole band felt. They wanted to burn him then and there, but Black Wolf would not consent to it.

"The Mingoos are all cowardly skunks," said Old Disaster. "They can't stand a kick from a white man. Their necks are like papooses' necks. Bah!"

The Mingoos looked upon him as one more deserving their vengeance than any enemy they had ever captured, and they resolved to have a big burning when they reached their village.

As Lau-too-na had given them no trouble since her capture, they did not take much care of her after they crossed the river. They even removed the bonds that bound her hands, and Black Wolf even walked by her side on the march and tried to win her smiles. But she continued obdurate, denouncing him as a coward.

On the third night she was left at the foot of a tree to sleep. Old Disaster being bound to a tree on the other side of the camp-fire. Warriors were lying on the ground all around her, and no one of them believed she would make an attempt to leave of her own accord.

It was long after midnight when she opened her eyes and glanced over the camp at the guard and sleeping warriors. The guard was nodding, as if half inclined to go to sleep.

Suddenly the wild hope entered her heart that if the guard slept she could release Old Disaster. If he were once free he would rescue her. She would wait and see, and in a moment she was as wideawake as ever she was in her life.

An hour passed and the sentinel slept as he squatted before the camp-fire. Slowly she rose to her feet.

A tomahawk lay on the ground by the side of a warrior almost within her reach.

She stepped softly forward and picked it up.

A knife lay near it.

She took that also, and then looked over at Old Disaster.

He was watching her.

A dozen dusky warriors lay between them, but she began the cautious, panther-like steps which only an Indian can make.

One, two, three warriors were passed and the fourth moved uneasily in his sleep.

She stopped with one foot poised above him, with the tomahawk raised to strike if he should awake and give the alarm.

But he was not awake, and so she stepped over him and thus got nearer the captive.

Two minutes passed and she was still cautiously moving forward over the sleeping warriors.

At last she reached him.

With the scalping-knife she cut the thongs that bound him to the tree. Then she cut the thongs that bound his feet.

Old Disaster stretched his arms to get the cramp out of them and then looked at the brave girl who had done him such a favor.

She held out the knife and tomahawk to him.

He took the knife, and then gave a wistful glance at his own hunting-knife and rifle lying on the ground by the sentinel.

A desire to possess them impelled him to make the effort to get them.

But if the lithe and graceful Lau-too-na could step as softly as a cat, he could not.

Just as he stooped to pick up the weapons the sentinel opened his eyes and looked at him.

Their eyes met.

Old Disaster had his knife in his hand.

The sentinel well knew that to give the alarm would be to give up his own life.

But he was faithful to his own band.

He gave a yell, and it was his last.

In a moment every warrior was on his feet, completely surrounding the captive.

Old Disaster gave two more death wounds and then saw that escape was impossible.

There were too many warriors all around him.

Black Wolf, when he saw the prisoner completely surrounded, sprang at him with a yell, tomahawk in hand. Old Disaster caught him by the wrist, wrenched the weapon from his hand and threw him heavily to the ground. Both went down together, and a dozen warriors piled on top of them.

At last they disarmed him and held him fast, and the warriors rose to their feet.

Some were hurt and some were not.

But Black Wolf had lost his scalp!

Old Disaster held it in his hand.

"Thars yer h'ar, Black Wolf," he said, throwing the scalp in the chief's face.

The warriors looked at the chief in dismay.

The disgraced savage stood like one in a dream, scarcely realizing what had happened.

The intolerable pain of the wound was almost offset by the horror of the degradation that had so suddenly come upon him.

The Indian who had lost his scalp became an outcast. His people drove him from the tribe and his wife and children disowned him. The poorest, meanest mongrel cur was respected more than he.

No wonder that the chief stood like one in a dream.

He could not realize what had been done till his warriors stood away from him and began taunting him. Then he turned sadly away and wandered off into the woods, leaving his scalp-lock where it had fallen.

The terrible disaster that had befallen their chief took up so much of the warriors' time that they gave no thought to the Miami maiden who had been the sole cause of the trouble.

She had not been thought of during the fight, and so she darted away into the woods and was out of sight in a moment.

Old Disaster was bound to the tree again; but he saw that the girl had made her escape. For that he was glad—for her sake as well as his own. He did not believe that she would forget what she had received at his hands.

A few moments after they had secured the captive again the warriors missed the girl.

Then they set up a howl and began searching for her.

But she was out of their reach, as they could not follow a trail in the dark, and she lost no time in getting further away, so that daylight would not again throw her into their hands.

She saw enough to know that Old Disaster had been overpowered and recaptured after killing several warriors. But she did not know that Black Wolf had been scalped by him, nor that the degraded chief had left the camp. Her only desire was to return to the trapper's cabin and let his two stalwart sons know of his peril. All thoughts of her own people had vanished from her mind. She thought only of the great white chief who had done such wonderful deeds of prowess before her very eyes.

She started back toward the river as nearly straight as she



could guess. But when daylight came she found that she had made the circle of the camp without being aware of it. The moment she made the discovery she fled southward toward the river as fast as her heels could carry her.

She ran without giving any thought as to the trail she was making. Her only thought was to get away from the dangerous locality as fast as she could.

She had run several miles when she saw a solitary Indian sitting on the ground with his blanket drawn up about his head. The sight caused her to stop and gaze wonderingly at the mute figure.

She knew that the brave was cast out, for the customs of the Indians were familiar to her. But she wanted to know who he was and who had been the cause of his disgrace. If the palefaces had done it, she would then know that Old Disaster's sons were not at home in the cabin on the banks of the Ohio.

Thus impelled, she moved forward to speak to him.

She stepped boldly, so as to attract his attention and cause him to look up.

But the savage drew his blanket closer about his person and sat as still and silent as a statue, and would not look up at her.

"Will the red man look up from his sorrow," she asked, "and speak to the daughter of a chief?"

At the sound of her voice the blanket was thrown aside and the tall form of Black Wolf rose to its full height. His scalp was gone.

"Lau-too-na has seen Black Wolf's disgrace," he said, fiercely. "She shall not live to boast of it!"

## CHAPTER X.

### THE DEATH OF BLACK WOLF.

The Miami maiden stood rooted to the spot as the fierce Mingo chief rushed upon her.

He looked all the more fierce for having been scalped.

She avoided him by springing nimbly aside, and exclaimed:

"Ugh! Black Wolf lose his scalp and fight maidens and papooses."

"Black Wolf will die," fiercely answered the chief, "and the Miami maiden shall die with him," and he made another attempt to seize her.

But she had now drawn the scalping-knife which she had kept since making her escape.

Quick as a flash she sent it through the hand that sought to grasp her arm.

"Ugh!" grunted the chief springing back, "maiden fight. Black Wolf glad. He kill her and—ugh!"

She gave him another cut—this time in the shoulder, and again he sprang back as if afraid to get too near the weapon.

He was about to make a third attempt to seize her when a fierce growl startled both of them.

A dog shot through the bushes and sprang at the throat of the chief.

"Ugh! Great White Chief's dog!" exclaimed the maiden, recognizing Perdicion.

The chief seized the dog with both hands and a terrible struggle ensued.

They both went down together and rolled over and over on the ground. Perdicion hung on to his throat, shaking him in his tenacious death grip till the savage gave up the fight, unable longer to resist.

The maiden stood by and saw her worst enemy destroyed before her eyes and was wondering where the dog came from when she heard the footsteps of two men behind her.

Turning quickly, she found herself face to face with Dan and Peter Robinson.

"Lau-too-na's heart is glad," she said, with an expression of joy on her dusky countenance.

"Where is my father?" Dan asked.

"Great white chief is a captive—Lau-too-na come tell his sons," she answered.

Of course, they did not understand her words, but her signs were as expressive as plain English to them.

Dan made signs to her to lead on and they would follow.

She understood them, and at once started in the direction of the Mingo camp.

Black Wolf was dead, so they had nothing to fear from him.

Lau-too-na led the way, talking to them in her soft Miami tongue and giving both of them glances of satisfied pleasure.

They had proceeded some four or five miles on their way when a low growl from Perdicion warned them that danger was near.

"Down!" whispered Dan, and Peter and the dog immediately crouched down under a thick clump of bushes.

The girl did the same the moment she understood the movement.

A few minutes after they had concealed themselves a party of four Mingo warriors came in sight.

They were searching the woods for the escaped Miami maiden.

She immediately recognized them and made signs to the two brothers to say that they were looking for her.

They understood her and motioned her to keep quiet.

The Mingo came right into the bushes where our heroes were concealed, and in a moment Perdicion seized one by the calf of his leg.

The savage believed he had been seized by a wolf or panther. He gave a howl and began a terrible battle with the dog.

Of course, the others sprang to his assistance, and the dog would have fared badly had not Dan and Peter rushed to his defense.

Two of the savages were brained by the heavy rifles ere the others were aware that a new enemy had shown up.

The other two then found themselves face to face with the two brothers.

Perdicion gave one of them all the fight he wanted.

Dan closed with the other with his hunting-knife and soon wound him up.

Peter and the dog disposed of the other and last one in very short order.

Lau-too-na was amazed at such terrible work in such quick time, and uttered many expressions of delight and admiration which they did not understand.

But they lost little time in following up the lead of the girl, who pressed on toward the spot where the Mingo had encamped with their captives the night before.

They did not see any more searching parties.

The Mingo probably believed that four warriors were sufficient to find the maiden and bring her back into camp.

By and by they came in sight of the camp.

They were waiting for the maiden, and evidently expected her return every moment.

But the hours passed and no maiden returned.

Then they began to cast about for a trail to follow.

She had gone completely around them, and when their second party had followed her trail around the camp the shadows of night began to fall upon the great forest.

All these things our young heroes saw from their place of concealment.

At last night came on and the second party came in.

The four warriors who first went out had not returned.

They never would return, and the other braves began to wonder what had become of them.

Old Disaster was held fast by deerskin thongs that bound



him to a tree not far from the camp-fire. He was in nowise daunted by the situation.

He sat silent as a statue, gazing at the glowing camp-fire.

But his eyes and ears were open for every sight and sound.

He saw that the braves were worrying about something. Four warriors had been sent off in quest of Lau-too-na. The day had passed and they had not returned.

They feared they had fallen in with a band of Miamis. There were not enough white settlers west of the Alleghanies to give them any worry.

Old Disaster smiled grimly to himself as he learned what was worrying them. He had his suspicions as to what had happened to the four warriors. But he said nothing.

As the night wore on and the braves not returning, the warriors turned their attention to their captive.

The newly elected chief who succeeded Black Wolf went up to where he was tied to the tree and plucked a handful of hair out of his beard.

The old trapper's eyes fairly danced with rage. But he could do nothing. His hands and feet were tied hard and fast.

"The paleface is silent, said the chief. "He is thinking of the fire that is waiting for him."

"The Mingo chief is not wise," replied the old trapper, "or he would know what the paleface is thinking about."

"What does the paleface think?"

"He thinks many things that would make the Mingo chief wise if he only knew. But the chief is a fool. He will not learn."

"Ugh! Paleface much talk!" said the chief. "He does not know much as Mingo dog."

"If the chief will bend down his ear and listen he will learn something he does not know."

"Ugh! What paleface know?" and the young chief bent over and brought his ugly face within an inch of the captive's.

Quick as a flash the old trapper butted him squarely on the nose.

Had a thunderbolt struck him the chief could not have fallen more completely stunned than he did.

He went down like a log.

The warriors who saw the butting roared with laughter.

They did not resent it because it was done by a captive who was bound hand and foot.

The chief slowly pulled himself together and rose to a sitting posture.

His nose was broken and his beauty—what little he had—was spoiled forever.

He gazed around at his braves in a dazed sort of way and they roared louder than before.

They had no sympathy for one another under such circumstances.

"What's the matter with your nose, chief?" Old Disaster asked.

"Ugh!" grunted the chief, springing to his feet and drawing his tomahawk. "Me kill paleface and take his scalp!"

He rushed at him and would have buried his tomahawk in his brain had not his warriors restrained him.

They did not intend to be cheated out of the pleasure of burning him at the stake when they returned home with him.

"Pears to me," said the old trapper, "you have had a disaster, chief. What's the matter with yer nose?"

"Ugh!" grunted another brave; "me pull hair, too," and he made a quick grab for his beard to pluck a handful of it.

Old Disaster made a snap at his hand, dog fashion, and bit off his thumb.

The warrior's yell awoke all the echoes of the forest.

The others again roared with merriment and looked at the thumbless hand as if they considered it the funniest thing they had ever seen.

"The brave can't pull any hair now," said the captive. "He has a sore hand. His squaw will tie it up for him and call him her papoose."

Another roar greeted the thumbless warrior. He was so enraged that he sprang at the captive to pluck a handful of his beard.

Quick as a flash the trapper caught him again. This time he lost a finger and he yelled like a lunatic.

Every warrior had crowded around the captive to see the fun, and their roars of laughter filled the woods.

They began to regard him in the light of one who could give them all the fun they wanted.

An old warrior—the oldest brave in the band—stepped up to him and, patting him on the head, said:

"Paleface make Mingo warriors laugh. By and by Mingo make paleface laugh."

"What can a redskin do?" sneered the captive. "The Mingo goes are all skunks. They don't know how ter scalp an enemy or burn a captive—bah!"

The old warrior began feeling cautiously so as to get hold of his beard, but the old trapper knew what he was up to, and ere the redskin knew it he had lost part of a finger.

The warriors roared again and the fun went on until long after midnight.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ON THE TRAIL—THE INDIANS AND THEIR CAPTIVES—THE MINGO CAMP.

During all this time Dan, Peter and the Miami maiden lay concealed in a thicket, whence they could see all that took place in the Indian camp.

But it was hard for them to forbear firing upon the redskins when they saw the indignities that were heaped upon the captive.

To have done so would have invited sure destruction upon all.

They were men who knew how to control themselves under all circumstances and never gave way to impulse.

Lau-too-na would chuckle with delight when she saw the captive snap off a finger.

Perdition lay with his head on his paws, waiting for the signal to pounce upon the redskins. He seemed to be endowed with human intelligence to comprehend the danger of attacking so many warriors.

By and by the warriors began to lie down around the camp-fire.

Sleep was creeping upon them by degrees. The two young trappers, who were silently watching in the bushes, waited for a chance to strike.

But the hours passed and two or three warriors still remained awake.

They dared not strike as long as there remained a possibility of defeat.

The night passed away and the gray dawn appeared.

Dan and Peter crept away, followed by the maiden and Perdition.

They wanted to be out of the way when the warriors broke up camp and resumed their journey.

Such a party could not conceal its trail, and our heroes well knew that no attempt to do so would be made.

They accordingly went back a couple of miles, killed a deer and cooked rations enough to last them a week.

Lau-too-na was a fine cook, Indian fashion, and made herself very useful to them in various ways.

Some two hours after the Mingo started on their homeward journey our heroes set out on their trail.

Their course was due north.



About noon Dan made the discovery of another trail. Another band of Mingoes had come in.

"There's a big band of 'em now," he said to his brother Peter.

"Yes—an' we'll have to be careful."

Lau-too-na also saw the trail and called their attention to it.

Late in the afternoon they were discovered by a couple of Indian hunters who had been sent out to secure meat for the evening meal.

They were two miles away from the main body, but the warriors showed fight at once.

"Don't shoot!" said Dan. "The reports of our rifles would bring the whole band down on us."

They sprang for shelter, as did the maiden also.

Perdition narrowly escaped being transfixed by an arrow.

He crouched behind Dan and awaited orders.

The warriors had seen only Dan, the girl and Perdition.

After waiting an hour the two warriors resolved to push things and began to creep up nearer to the trees behind which our heroes had sought shelter.

Dan calculated that the main body had progressed at least three miles during the hour, and was not therefore much afraid of being heard by them.

Accordingly he waited for a good chance to give one of them his quietus. It soon occurred and the dusky warrior was sent to the happy hunting grounds by a bullet.

The other savage then saw that he was alone. A moment later he made the discovery that there were two palefaces instead of one.

With all his savage courage he wished to avoid such odds. He had seen enough of Old Disaster since his capture to make him feel dubious about tackling two of the white race all by himself.

Dan and Peter waited for him to advance, but, instead of that, they saw him trying to slip away.

"After him, Peter," said Dan, and the two brothers made chase after him.

The redskin saw them coming and broke into a run.

Dan and Peter dashed forward at full speed, with Perdition and the Miami girl after them.

But the Mingo was fleet-footed.

He ran like a deer and was leaving his pursuers behind when Dan called to the dog:

"Take him, Perdition!"

Perdition darted forward like a rocket and, without so much as uttering a growl, overtook the redskin and seized him by the leg.

The Mingo tried to use his tomahawk on him. In the struggle they both rolled over on the ground.

Ere the Mingo could recover from the confusion occasioned by the attack of the dog Dan and Peter were on him.

They could not kill him as he was struggling with the dog, so Dan ordered Perdition to let go.

The dog obeyed, and the savage, badly torn, arose and confronted them.

To their surprise he made a desperate attack on the girl, who sprang aside just in time to avoid being brained by his tomahawk.

"Ugh!" he grunted, "me kill Miami maiden."

Peter closed with him in a single-handed combat and in about one minute he was the worst cut up savage ever seen in those woods.

He laid down and died.

There were too many holes in him.

Lau-too-na ran up to Peter and gave him her hand, saying:

"Paleface great brave!"

But he did not understand her words, though. He knew,

however, that she was complimenting him on his victory, so he turned and bowed to her and said:

"We don't let 'em get the best of us," and he patted her on her head.

The two warriors out of their way, the young heroes pushed on and after the band of Mingoes.

When night came on again they were only two or three miles behind them. By cautiously moving forward they kept to the trail till they came in sight of the camp-fires.

There were two large fires, indicating the presence of two bands.

In both parties there were probably two hundred warriors.

It was, therefore, necessary that they exercise extreme caution in their movements.

Dan and Lau-too-na went round by one camp-fire, while Peter and Perdition made the circuit of the other.

Their object was to get the exact location and ascertain how the prisoner would be fixed for the night.

As Dan and the girl moved cautiously around toward the right they were astounded at seeing two young white captives seated on a log near the camp-fire.

They were young girls, apparently about the age of the Miami maiden.

Dan stopped and glared in the greatest amazement.

Where in the wide world did those two young white girls come from?

He saw their faces by the light of the camp-fire and thought he had never seen two more lovely creatures in all his life.

Lau-too-na also gazed upon them in supreme astonishment.

They were the first white females she had ever seen.

Dan saw that they were not bound, and that their captors were comparatively kind to them in that they did not annoy them in any way.

He stood there nearly ten minutes gazing at the white, tear-stained faces of the two girls, and then moved on round the camp to meet his brother.

When nearly half way round Perdition came up and licked his hand. Dan knew then that Peter was near.

In another moment they met.

Dan motioned Peter to follow him back into the woods, and he did so.

"Peter," he said, in a low tone of voice, as he leaned forward, "there are two white girls over there in the other camp."

"My Heaven! is that so!"

"Yes—and we must not leave 'em there."

"No; we must save 'em."

"When we have father with us we can save them."

"Yes, that's so."

They then decided to lie down in a thick clump of bushes and await an opportunity to rescue the old trapper, or else punish any attempt to hurt him.

The two bands amused themselves till a late hour telling stories of their adventures on the warpath. They then laid down about midnight to sleep, leaving one of their number in each camp to sit up and watch.

There were four more watchers in the bushes whom they did not take into consideration.

The hours passed and still a number of the warriors were restless. They slept lightly and some of them rolled a good deal.

Old Disaster would now and then raise his head and glance around at the dark forest that surrounded the camp.

Something told him that his two brave boys were hovering around the camp, waiting and watching for the chance to help him.

By and by the Miami maiden pointed toward the two young



girls at the other camp and by motions of her hands told them to look out for both.

Then she drew the scalping-knife which she had carried with her ever since her escape and began crawling toward the tree where Old Disaster sat bound hand and foot.

Dan wanted to detain her and look after his father himself. But she would not be interfered with. She insisted with such firmness that he had to let her go for fear of awakening the savages.

He gazed after her as she crept forward and saw that no panther could move more cautiously than she. He and Peter then turned their attention to the two girl captives.

"One will do," said Peter, in a low whisper to him. "You stand here and watch both, so as to render the aid that may be needed. I'll go forward."

The sentinels at the two fires sat with bowed heads. They were both dozing. They had no fears of an enemy in that part of the country, and so did not deem it very necessary to keep awake.

The girl crept forward slowly, softly, with the knife in her hand.

She kept the body of the tree between her and the captive.

The minutes seemed like hours to Dan as he stood at his post watching first one and then the other.

By and by he crept a little forward himself in his eagerness to see all, and watched the Indian maiden as she wormed her way to the foot of the tree where Old Disaster was bound.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE RESCUE AND ESCAPE.

The dusky maiden reached the tree and halted.

A dozen savages were lying within as many feet of her.

If one of them should open his eyes and discover her presence there, no earthly power could save her from again falling into their clutches.

No one knew that better than herself. Yet she never faltered for a moment in her effort to save the man who had once risked his life for her.

Being sure that they all slept, she raised her hand and cut the thongs that bound the captive to the tree.

The moment they were severed Old Disaster knew that some one was at work for him.

He sat still as a statue, and in a minute or so beheld a dark form crawling along over the roots of the tree.

Looking down, he recognized the dusky face of Lau-too-na, the Miami maiden.

The discovery gave him no little surprise, for he believed she had made her way back to her people.

He had thought that she might have made her way back to his cabin to warn Dan and Peter as to what had befallen him.

But her presence there told that she had not deserted him, and a very tender feeling toward her sprang up in his heart.

The moment she saw that she was recognized she laid a finger on her lips as a token of silence and proceeded to cut the bonds that bound his limbs.

The next moment he was free.

He sat still as a mouse, as if to think, and then motioned to her to go back.

She glided back as noiselessly as she had advanced, leaving him sitting just as she had found him.

Dan had not seen him move and did not know that his bonds had been cut.

He was puzzled to see her returning, and suspected that she had found some of the warriors awake.

She arose to a sitting posture on reaching the bushes. Then, rising to her feet, she motioned to him that Old Disaster was free.

The next moment he saw his father rise to his feet and step behind the tree.

Then he saw him stoop and pick up a tomahawk.

That was the only weapon in reach at the moment.

To creep out to the bushes was a task that required immense caution.

The breaking of a twig would have aroused nearly every warrior on the ground, and escape would have been impossible.

But he succeeded in getting into the bushes, and was amazed beyond expression when he felt Dan's hand in his.

Dan pointed toward the two young girls at the other camp-fire.

The old man looked and saw a hand behind them cutting their bonds.

The glow of the coals enabled him to see as much, and he waited with breathless interest the result of the movement.

The moment the girls felt that their hands, which had been tied only when the warriors lay down to sleep, were free, they stood up, and came near awakening the guard by so doing.

Peter was frightened for a moment or two. He apprehended that the whole band would be on him in another moment.

But they were sleeping well.

The two girls turned and looked around and saw that their deliverer was a white man.

That discovery filled their hearts with joy. They believed that escape was at hand and waited to be guided by their rescuer.

He motioned them to follow him.

They did so and stepped as softly as panthers till they reached the bushes where Old Disaster and Dan awaited them.

Then they moved back into the woods as fast as they could without making any noise.

In a little while they were at least a mile from the camp and the old man turned to one of the white girls and asked:

"Who are you?"

My name is Sarah Stewart," she said, "and this is my sister Martha."

"How come you here?"

"My father moved over the mountains two weeks ago, and two days ago the cabin was attacked by the Mingoes and all the family carried off except father, who was killed."

"Where did you live?"

"Over on Cherry Creek."

"Where is that?"

"South of the big river (the Ohio)."

"And how far from here?"

"Oh, it's a long way off."

"I never heard of it before. What name do the Indians give it?"

"We don't know."

"Did they take your mother away, too?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, and my mother's sister," and both girls began to cry.

Just then the yells of the Mingoes back at the camp a mile away came through the great forest.

"Ah! they have discovered our escape," said Dan. "They can't follow our trail till morning. We must make all the time we can to-night."

"Can you walk far?" Peter asked of Martha, whose hand he felt in his.

"Yes; I am not in the least tired."

"Nor am I," said Sarah, taking Dan's hand.

"Then come," said Old Disaster, taking Lau-too-na's hand and leading the way.

They pressed on as fast as they could, determined to place as many miles between them and their pursuers as possible.

"Lau-too-na is a brave maiden," said the old man, in Miami



language, to the Indian girl, "and his heart is glad when she is near him. She has saved him from the Mingo skunks."

"Lau-too-na loves the great white chief," said she, very frankly. "She would not leave him with his enemies. When the great chief dies Lau-too-na will die, too."

Old Disaster was surprised at her frank avowal of love, but made no reply. He pressed her hand and led her steadily through the forest toward the river.

It was not necessary to lead one so well versed in woodcraft as she, but he did so for her sake. He knew it would please her, and so he kept it up till daylight enabled them to see which way they were going.

"We have made good time," he said to his sons—"much better than I expected. If we don't meet any redskins we can reach the river by noon."

"Why do you think so, father?" Dan asked.

"Because I know where we are," he replied, looking around.

They pushed on, not even stopping to get something to eat. They ate of the cold rations Dan and Peter carried with them as they walked.

By the light of day Dan and Peter saw that the two sisters were beautiful indeed, though they were browned and very much fatigued.

The two sisters also regarded the two young hunters with no little admiration.

At noon they reached the Ohio river and at once began a search for canoes.

After going down a mile or two they found two.

"We want another," said Peter.

"These will do," said the old man. "You four take that one. Lau-too-na and I will go in this one."

So they embarked and began rowing up stream.

"They will think we have gone down stream," said Dan, "as our trail leads that way."

The Miami girl was a good rower, and after they crossed over to the Kentucky side laid herself down to hard work.

The canoes fairly flew through the water.

Night came on and found them still miles away from the cabin on the bluff.

But they reached it by and by. The canoes passed under the bluff into the cavern, where the six persons got out and the canoes were drawn up on the sand.

"Strike a light, Dan," said the old man.

Dan went to work with his tinder-box and in due time a light was started.

Sarah and Martha looked around the cavern in no little surprise. They saw many things which a long occupation had accumulated.

"Is this your home?" Sarah asked of Dan.

"Yes—a part of it. Those steps lead up to a cabin on the bluff overhead. Down here we have perfect safety and provisions to last many months."

"Oh, I am so glad!"

"So am I," said Martha.

"Now we can have something to eat," said the old man, and they proceeded at once to cook and eat a substantial meal.

After the meal the three girls were led upstairs and given possession of the cabin for the night. They were provided with bearskins for beds.

"Sleep, for you will not be disturbed," said the old man.

They slept all night, and the next morning the Indian girl led them back down below, where Dan was broiling venison steak for breakfast.

"Oh, you must let us cook," said Sarah. "We know all about how to cook."

"So do we. Did you sleep well?"

"Yes," she said, "but we dreamed of our poor parents all night."

"I am sorry for them," said Dan. "Your father is out of trouble. We must find out where your mother is."

With sad hearts the two girls went to work and took charge of the meals and in a little while they were served.

Late in the afternoon Perdition gave the alarm of Indians. The redskins had come direct to the cabin, knowing that Old Disaster once lived there.

"Quick! close the door!" said Dan, and in a moment they were shut up in the cabin.

"Oh, they'll burn the cabin, as well as us!" cried Sarah.

"It has been burned twice already," said Dan. "We went below into the cavern and the redskins, thinking they had roasted us alive, went away."

"Oh, what a blessed thing that cavern is!" cried Martha.

Rap, rap, rap!

A tomahawk was knocking on the door.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### A BATTLE AGAINST ODDS.

The order to secure the cabin door was not given a moment too soon.

The rapping of tomahawks against it only a moment or two after it was closed told that the redskins were near by when the dog discovered their presence.

The Mingo fiercely demanded in their tongue that the door be opened.

For answer Peter drew out one of the pegs in the door and sent a bullet through the hole.

Then went up a howl from half a hundred throats.

But the three men inside kept cool and proceeded to prepare for a siege.

Dan and his father gave them a shot each and then the battle began.

The Mingo crowded around the door and cut away at it with their tomahawks as if they expected to cut it down in a very few minutes.

But the thick oaken door was not to be hacked through on very short notice.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

The father and two sons each gave them a shot, and at close range they were fatal ones.

With howls of rage the savages ran back out of range held a council of war over the situation.

Some of the warriors had belonged to a party that attacked the cabin a year before and burned it to the ground, with white chief and his two sons in it.

How it was they were still alive mystified them beyond measure.

But they did not wish to destroy the two white maidens.

The chiefs wanted them saved as captives.

They were willing to burn the white men, though.

So they resolved to make another attack on the cabin—together.

The charge was made and the rush was met with three rifle shots that laid out three braves on the green grass.

As fast as they could reload their rifles Old Disaster and his two sons gave them showers of bullets.

But their blows on the heavy oaken door were fast and furious. Still it defied all their efforts to cut it down.

Their braves kept dropping, one at a time, till so many of them lay around the cabin that the chief called them away.

"Ugh!" said the chief. "Mingo warriors great braves, but paleface kill 'em all."

They counted losses and found that nearly a score had been shot, killed or wounded.



This was appalling.

They called a halt and held another council.

The last resort of fire was adopted.

To carry fagots and pile them against the cabin was not to thought of.

The warriors would only expose themselves to a galling fire to do so.

They fell back on the burning arrows, and in less than an hour's time they were flying through the air and lodging on the roof of the cabin.

"Oh, they will burn down the cabin!" cried Sarah Stewart, in great alarm.

"Yes," said Martha. "That is the way they destroyed our home. Oh, if we had never left Virginia!"

"You are perfectly safe here," said Dan, turning to Sarah. "Even if they succeed in setting fire to the cabin we can go below and be out of harm's way. They will then think we all perished in the flames and go away."

"Did they ever do that?" Martha asked.

"Yes; twice."

"The cabin has been rebuilt but a short time," said Peter, "and I don't think the timber is seasoned enough for it to catch fire from bunches of dry straw."

The three men stood where they could keep a watch on all that was going on outside. The peg holes gave them a decided advantage of the situation, and every now and then they brought down one of the besiegers.

After at least a score of burning arrows had been fired without igniting the roof of the cabin the savages desisted.

Another council of war was held and it was decided that, as the palefaces were cooped up in the cabin, they could not get away as long as any warriors remained on guard.

They resolved to starve them out.

"Palefaces must have water," said one of the braves, "Mingo warriors wait till thirst drives palefaces to the river."

They accordingly placed guards around the cabin, except on the river side, but out of range of the deadly rifles, and waited the slow process of starvation, as they thought.

When daylight came they sent off runners for more warriors and quietly waited for their coming.

In the meantime, the six persons in the cabin were not in the least uneasy.

"They have had enough for to-night," said the old trapper. "It has been a reg'lar disaster to them. You girls may lay down an' sleep as much as yer want to."

"Oh, we can't sleep when we know that hostile Indians are prowling around the cabin," said Sarah.

"Let 'em prowl," said the old man. "They won't prowl very close after the disaster they have had to-night."

"Yes," said Dan, "you had better go to sleep every chance you get, for you may not have such good quarters to-morrow night."

"I don't think I could sleep," said Martha, "but I am willing to try."

"That's a good girl," said Peter. "Try it and see if you can't sleep. We are going to keep watch for you all night."

The two white girls laid down, and in a little while both were soundly sleeping in each other's arms.

The Miami maiden looked at them in a strange sort of a way as they lay on the big bearskin robe.

Dan eyed her closely and mentally measured her.

But he could not understand the curiosity that was manifested in her dusky countenance.

He suspected that they were the first white girls she had ever seen, and thought her interest lay in that fact.

After a while the old man motioned Lau-too-na to lie down and sleep, too.

She understood him, and taking up a bearskin from a corner of the room she spread it on the floor at his feet.

Then she laid down and was soon in the arms of Morpheus. The hours passed slowly away.

The savages believed that the brave defenders of the cabin would sleep after an hour or two of silence.

Two of them undertook to creep up to the cabin and see what was going on.

Dan soon spotted them as they crawled along on their bellies and called his father's attention to them.

"Let 'em come," said the old man, "an' we'll give 'em a disaster they don't dream of."

"Yes," whispered Peter, "we can take care of 'em. There are only two of them."

"Let's scalp 'em when they get up to the door," suggested Dan. "They are coming up to see what they can find out. When they reach the door we can open it and take 'em in hand."

"Good!" said the old man. "It will have a cooling effect on the whole tribe if they go back without their scalplocks."

Sarah and Martha heard the whispering and sat up.

They were too nervous to sleep under the circumstances.

"Whatever you see and hear," said the old man to them, "keep quiet. Don't say a word."

"Are they coming again?" Sarah asked.

"Only two of 'em."

That satisfied her there was no particular danger to be apprehended.

She sat there on the bearskins and listened.

She saw the three men move cautiously toward the door.

The fastenings were carefully removed and the door held in readiness to be opened when wanted.

Suddenly it was thrown wide open and the two young men sprang out upon a couple of Mingo warriors.

"Ugh!" grunted the two warriors the moment they saw the assailants.

The next moment they were engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with them.

As it waxed hot both braves gave the war-whoop of the tribe.

Instantly half a hundred others returned the whoop from the forest and made a rush toward the cabin.

"Quick!" cried the old man. "They are all comin'!"

The four rolled over and over on the ground, and a few seconds later Dan and Peter dashed into the cabin with two scalps in their hands.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE THREE MAIDENS—THE CABIN GOES UP AGAIN IN FLAMES.

The band of howling Mingo reached the cabin just in time to see the door closed in their faces.

But they made the welkin ring with their whoops.

Suddenly the bright moonlight revealed to their astonished vision two scalpless warriors in their midst.

Yes, two warriors had lost their scalps and were yet alive. That was the lowest depth to which a brave could fall. He could go no lower than that.

Crack! crack! crack!

Three rifle shots sent three braves reeling and the others scattered.

The two warriors who had fallen heirs to such unutterable misery did not run a yard.

They would have preferred to die rather than roam the woods as outcasts for ever.

But Dan and the others inside would not fire upon them.

They knew they would never fight again, as no tribe would harbor them under any consideration.



The intolerable pain drove them to the river, though, for they were thirsty in their agony.

There they found a canoe. They took it and rowed away, going down the stream.

The others retired from the cabin to be out of range of the death-dealing rifles.

When morning came the savages had established a regular siege of the cabin.

"They don't know we are prepared for that," said Dan, laughing. "We can go down into the cavern and bathe and fish and cook game to our heart's content."

"It is fortunate, indeed," said Sarah.

"Yes—they never suspect that we have such a retreat."

"But if they do could they capture us?" Martha asked.

"No. We can defend it against a thousand warriors," replied Dan.

"Who is the Indian girl?" Sarah asked.

"She is the daughter of a Miami chief. She was captured by the Mingoos, but made her escape and came here in search of her father, who was out on a hunt with his braves. We took her in, and she has been with us ever since. She does not care to leave us now."

"What is her name?" Martha asked.

"Lau-too-na."

"That is a beautiful name."

"Yes. She heard us, an' looks at us as if to know why I called her name. I'll try to make her understand."

Dan beckoned to the Indian maiden and she came to his side. Taking her hand, he placed it in Sarah's and said:

"Sarah!"

"Sarah," repeated the dusky maiden.

Then he turned to Martha and said:

"Martha!"

Lau-too-na repeated the name and gave each girl a friendly smile. The three then seemed to take a liking to each other.

The day passed and late in the afternoon a wild hubbub among the redskins told those in the cabin that another party had come upon the scene.

"They have got more warriors now," said Old Disaster, as he stood at one of the peepholes and watched the proceedings outside.

"How many?" Dan asked.

"Don't know. They are going ter show us by marchin' round an' round in the bushes."

"Oh, that is their old game. I wonder if they really believe they fool anybody by that dodge?"

"Yes, they think so, I reckon."

In a little while the Mingoos began to march round and round, passing a point where they could be viewed from the cabin. They kept it up for over an hour, the same warriors passing in review at least a score of times.

Then they stopped, believing they had struck terror into the hearts of the palefaces. A half hour later a solitary warrior came toward the cabin, bearing in his hand a bundle of arrows, which he held aloft.

"Oh, they want to talk to us," said the old man.

The warrior came up to within ten paces of the cabin and called out in the Mingo tongue:

"The palefaces must come out and the Mingoos will spare their lives."

"The Mingoos must go away," replied Old Disaster, in the same tongue, "or we won't spare their lives. We have done them no harm."

The warrior said:

"We are as the leaves of the forest. The palefaces cannot fight against so many great braves."

"We will fight against all the Mingoos. They cannot whip

us. If they would live they must go away and leave us alone."

No sooner had he made his report than the forest echoed with demoniacal yells. They rushed toward the cabin, two hundred or more, and began chopping on the door with their tomahawks.

Dan, Peter and Old Disaster again began their deadly work and for a half hour or more poured shot after shot into the mass of redskins before them.

The heavy oaken door resounded with the many blows of tomahawks, and the cuts began to tell. It was only a question of time as to their getting through.

But the steady fire from within told also, and the pile of dead or dying warriors grew larger every minute. The chief began to grow uneasy.

He watched warrior after warrior go down, and wondered how long it would take his braves to cut through the door.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The sharp crack of the rifles never failed to stir up a death yell from a redskin.

Suddenly the Mingoos broke and fled back to the woods.

The pile of dead and wounded before the cabin was appalling. The death song of a dozen was heard going at one time. Many had died without a chance to pipe their lay.

The Mingoos were dismayed.

They could not understand the secret of such awful destruction of life and called a council of war to consider the cause.

The result of their deliberations was another attempt to fire the cabin.

They went to work to gather dry grass or anything else that would burn and which could be attached to arrows.

Then they went to work and for two hours rained a shower of burning arrows on the roof of the cabin.

At last the roof caught fire and began to burn.

Dan was the first to make the discovery and said:

"The roof is burning. We may as well go below."

"Yes," said Peter. "They have set it going at last."

"Well, it has cost them dearly," remarked Dan.

"Yes—a reg'ler disaster," said the old man. "They won't forgit it as long as they live."

The three girls peeped through the pegholes in the side of the cabin and saw the dusky warriors dancing about like wild lunatics as the cabin began to burn briskly.

The Mingoos believed that the six inmates of the cabin would rush out and give themselves up rather than be roasted alive.

But they were doomed to a bitter disappointment.

The whites raised the trap-door and sent the three women down through the narrow passage to the cavern below, where they soon followed them, after adjusting the flat stone over the top of the entrance.

Then the cabin gradually succumbed to the flames, and the braves stood around, awe-struck at the martyrdom of the palefaces.

"Ugh! Palefaces all burn," said the chief, when he saw that no human being could have remained alive in that mass of glowing coals and flame.

The savages danced their dance of victory and remained encamped near the ruins of the cabin long enough to bury their dead and then went away.

Down in the cavern the little party were safely housed, eating of the provisions that had been stored away against such an event, and were content to wait till the Mingoos had gone away.

"Oh, if we had been so fortunate in our selection of a place for a home!" sighed Sarah Stewart, after Dan had reported the savages gone, "our father would have been alive then and our poor mother with us still."



"Yes," said Martha, bursting into tears; "it breaks my heart to think about it."

"When this trouble is over," said the old man, "we will go after your mother. Maybe we can find her."

"Oh, if you will, I—I——"

Sarah broke down altogether.

She had been bravely trying to keep her grief to herself. It had now burst forth in a passionate flood of tears.

"Cry as much as you like," said the old man, tenderly. "It will do you good."

They both had a good cry and then felt better for it.

"Oh, if I were only a man!" said Sarah, after she had dried her tears.

"What would you do?" Dan asked.

"I'd live on the trail of the Mingoes and kill every man, woman and child I could find of the hated tribe."

"You would?"

"Yes. The sight of so many of them dead and wounded yesterday made my heart rejoice that retribution had come to them at last."

"That's just the way I feel about them," said Dan. "If I could destroy the whole tribe at one blow I would do so."

"So would I," she replied. "They are the most heartless wretches of all the tribes."

"Well, they met a reg'ler disaster hyer," said the old man, after listening to the talk for a few minutes.

"What are you going to do for a house now?" Martha asked, after a pause.

"Build another one," quietly replied the old man, taking up his ax and climbing the stone steps that led up through the ashes of the last cabin.

"Do you want to go up and see us start another cabin?" Dan asked.

"Yes," replied the sisters, and they started up the steps after Dan and Peter, who had followed their father.

When the stone was lifted a quantity of ashes fell through, raising quite a cloud of dust. It set the three girls to coughing as if they were on the point of being strangled. But they were assisted up through the passage, however, and given some water to drink, after which they were all right.

In a little while three axes were making the chips fly, while the three girls kept up a strict watch for danger.

Three such workers as the father and two sons soon had timber enough cut to build the cabin. They worked like beavers, and the Indian girl looked on in amazement. She had never seen men work so before. Indian warriors never worked at anything save that which pertained to hunting and war.

When the timber was all prepared they went to work putting up the cabin.

This time two rooms instead of one were made. They were smaller than the one destroyed but the cabin was larger than the former one.

When it was finished the three girls were given the rear room and Sarah at once went to work to beautify both of them. With leaves and grass she made many pretty ornaments, and in a little while the two rooms looked cozy and comfortable.

## CHAPTER XV.

### A SUDDEN PEACE WITH THE MIAMIS.

A few days after the double cabin was finished Perdition gave the alarm that Indians were about.

Dan instantly called the girls inside and then gave a signal to his father and Peter, who were down on the river bank fishing.

Old Disaster and Peter hurried up toward the cabin on a run.

As they dashed into the cabin a dozen arrows stuck in the door.

The savages gave a whoop and rushed up to the cabin.

At the first sound of the war-whoops Lau-too-na sprang toward the door, crying out:

"Miami! Miami!"

"Open the door for her, Dan," said the old man. "They are her people."

Dan opened the door and found half a hundred warriors just in front, ready to rush in and begin the bloody work of death.

But the ringing voice of the Miami maiden rose above the din of war-whoops. They grew silent in an instant, and then she told them the story of her capture, escape and rescue by the palefaces, who defended her with their lives.

A tall, dignified-looking chief advanced toward her. She ran forward and caught him around the neck and kissed him.

He was her father—the great chief of the Miamis.

"Lau-too-na lives!" he said, as he pressed her to his heart, "and Grey Eagle's heart is glad. The palefaces are his friends. He will bury the hatchet."

Old Disaster was the only one of the whites who understood Miami. He saw that all danger was now past, and so he stepped forth and appeared in the midst of the warriors.

Grey Eagle advanced toward him and extended his hand.

"Grey Eagle is glad to meet his paleface brother," he said, in his native tongue. "He has saved the life of Lau-too-na. Grey Eagle is his friend."

Dan, Peter and the two girls then made their appearance, and the braves stared in wonder at them. The girls were more beautiful than any females they had ever seen before.

A friendly feeling soon spread itself and the band went into camp near the cabin. A hunting party went in quest of game, and that evening a grand feast was had.

Early that evening another band of Miamis crossed the river just below the bluff and came up to the cabin. They were surprised at seeing palefaces in the camp, but on learning the truth they became very friendly.

Old Disaster warned his friends and the two girls against letting the Miamis know anything about the cavern under the bluff, and trusted Lau-too-na's good sense to say nothing about it.

Grey Eagle remained with Old Disaster an entire week and then prepared to leave.

To his utter amazement his daughter refused to go.

"I will stay with my white sisters," she said.

"Let her stay, chief," said Old Disaster, "and she will cook her father's food for him when he comes this way. The palefaces will love her as a sister and she will be happy."

The old chief took a week to think about it, and during that time Lau-too-na devoted herself to the task of winning him over to her side. He loved her—the princess of his people—the most beautiful of all the Miami maidens, and it was a hard task for him to give her up. But when he saw that she had made up her mind about it he consented for her to remain, provided he could see her as often as he came that way.

That was agreed to, and the old chief went away with his braves, leaving her as a guarantee that peace would exist between his tribe and the palefaces.

When everything had settled down to quietude Old Disaster said to Sarah Stewart: "I am going to find your mother."

Sarah sprang up and threw her arms around his neck and burst into tears, crying:

"Oh, if you find her I'll never cease to love the very ground you walk on!"

In another hour he was gone with Perdition.

"Now we must keep closer," said Dan, after the old man was gone. "We have no dog now to give us warning of the ap-



proach of danger. We must look sharp or they may make a rush on us when we are not thinking about it."

Some two or three days after the old man left, as they were seated on the seat in front of the cabin, a tall young warrior was seen approaching.

He was alone.

But Sarah and Martha grew nervous, and would have run into the cabin had not Dan detained them.

"It's only one," he said. "Wait and see what he wants."

"Wah-noo-ga," said Lau-too-na, the moment she saw him, and she sprang up and ran to meet him, leaving the whites silent spectators of the meeting.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### OLD DISASTER GOES ON A MISSION.

On leaving the cabin the old trapper took a due north course and pushed his way through the woods toward the country of the Mingoes.

They pushed on till the shades of night warned the old man to seek a place of rest.

He soon found a convenient spot and prepared to get a good night's sleep after the day's tramp.

When he laid down to sleep Perdition curled up at his feet.

Old Disaster knew that the slightest danger would cause the dog to wake him up, so he took no further precautions outside of building a fire.

The fire kept other beasts away and he slept soundly till the twitter of the birds awoke him.

Starting out again, he kept up his course due north till he struck an old Indian trail which had long been used by the Mingoes in going from one village to another.

Old Disaster pushed along until he sighted an old Mingo village. Here he found the girls' mother. The tribe were a friendly one and the old hunter had no difficulty in getting permission to take Mrs. Stewart to her daughters.

They set out and in a few days she was reunited to her children.

A few days after Mrs. Stewart was comfortably settled news came by an Indian runner that a terrible battle had been fought between the Mingoes and Miamis, and that Grey Eagle had been killed.

Lau-too-na was grief-stricken. A chief of the tribe, named Black Hawk, on proposing marriage, was rejected, but some time during the night she was carried off.

Our friends were not sorry to get rid of her, afraid that in the end she would cause more or less trouble.

Time passed on and the deep snows of winter came. The stock of provisions in the cavern was ample for all their wants. Fuel was also abundant, and so they had nothing to do but enjoy themselves.

At times the two girls would go out on a half a day's hunt with Dan and Peter, as they knew no Indians would go on the warpath in the dead of winter.

It gradually became plain to the mother of the two girls that her daughters were in love with Dan and Peter. She did not object, as she found them to be young men of the right stamp. That Dan and Peter loved the girls could not for a moment be questioned.

One evening Dan asked Sarah to marry him. She was expecting it, and, giving him a loving look, asked:

"Do you love me?"

"Yes, better than I love my own soul."

"Then I'll be your wife," and they sealed their troth with a kiss.

Dan told of the engagement in the presence of the others.

"Good!" exclaimed the old man, grasping his son's hand.

"Just the thing I wanted to see. She's a good girl, Dan."

Sarah blushed and was happy, while her mother folded her to her heart and gave her blessing.

"Peter, are you going to stay single?" the old man asked, looking hard at his more bashful son.

Peter looked over at Martha, who sat a short distance from him.

She hung her head, blushed, turned pale and trembled like a leaf.

It was a trying situation for a young girl. Her mother went to her side and she hid her face in her bosom.

"Speak to her, Peter," said Old Disaster, urging Peter forward.

Peter was bashful as a girl, but was brave withal. He stepped up to the side of the mother and daughter and asked the former:

"May I have her?"

"Yes, if you love her," was the reply.

"I do love her," and then, taking Martha's hand in his, whispered:

"Martha, I love you. Will you be my life?"

"Yes," she murmured.

Mrs. Stewart resigned her to him, and in another moment the happy girl was clasped in the arms of the man she loved.

"There, now," said Mrs. Stewart, turning to the old hunter, "I have lost my children."

"So have I," he said.

"Not so, mother," said Sarah, as she clung to Dan. "My husband shall be your son. He will call you mother."

"Yes; you are henceforth my mother," said Dan.

Mrs. Stewart burst into tears and said:

"If you are all happy I shall be, too."

"Oh, I know we shall be happy as the days are long, mother," said Sarah, "for we love each other dearly, don't we, Dan?"

"Yes," said Dan, pressing her to his side with the arm that encircled her waist.

"You will not be more happy than Martha and me," said Peter, holding happy, bashful Martha to his heart.

"So I am to have two daughters, am I?" Old Disaster asked, looking at the two girls.

"Yes," said Sarah, "two dutiful daughters, who will love you always."

"Why don't you take mother?" Martha asked, looking up at the bronzed-faced old hunter. "She is better than both sister and me, and——"

"Tut, tut, daughter!" interrupted Mrs. Stewart, "to serve your mother so."

Old Disaster was hard hit, but he was equal to the occasion. He held out his hand to the widow and said:

"Martha is right. They will be all the happier to see us so. If I have found favor in your sight, take me, and I shall live for your happiness."

The widow looked him full in the face and said:

"I am no longer young, neither are you; but you look so much like my James that I can love you. I will be your wife."

Both Sarah and Martha sprang forward and kissed their mother, wishing her all the happiness they expected for themselves.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE TRIPLE MARRIAGE IN THE CABIN ON THE BLUFF.

It was a happy household that long winter evening in the little hut on the banks of the Ohio river.

The snow lay deep on the ground in the great forest and the winds howled through the leafless trees, while fields of floating ice on the river sent forth a grinding noise that was heard day and night. Yet the six hearts in the cabin beat high with hope and love.



They had all passed through a sea of trouble. No others of their race were probably within hundreds of miles of them. But what cared they? They lived in a little world of their own and were happy.

"I did not believe such happiness was in store for me," said Old Disaster to the widow one day.

"Nor did I. We must try to be as happy as our children."

"Yes, and our happiness will be as great," said he. "One of the boys must go over the mountains to Virginia for a minister to come and make us husbands and wives."

"Yes—one must go."

It was agreed that as soon as the snow melted and the birds began to sing Dan should make the long journey.

At last the spring time came and Dan set out over the mountains.

Sarah was left in tears, but the hope that he would return to be her husband reconciled her to the separation.

Old Disaster and Peter got out their axes and went to work building another room to the house.

One day Perdition was heard barking joyously in the edge of the woods.

Sarah sprang to her feet, and flew out of the cabin just as Dan and a tall, dignified-looking stranger appeared.

"Oh, Dan! Dan!" cried the happy girl, running forward and throwing herself into his arms.

He pressed her to his heart and kissed her repeatedly.

Then he introduced her to the man at his side, who, he said, was a minister.

The next day a feast was prepared and flowers filled the rooms of the little cabin. The three happy brides were busy putting the finishing touches to everything.

Precisely at noon they all stood up before the man of God.

The brides blushed and looked beautiful in their simple dresses, and were as happy as all brides are on such occasions.

In solemn words he performed the ceremony first for the elder couple, and Old Disaster and Mrs. Stewart were made man and wife.

Then followed Dan and Sarah, and after them Peter and Martha—the ceremony winding up with an earnest prayer for the happiness of all.

Then followed the happy greetings.

The minister remained a month with them, a happy witness of the supreme happiness that reigned in the little household.

He was shown through the cavern below and saw how secure they were in case of attack by savages.

The time finally came when the minister had to return to his people on the other side of the mountains.

It was finally agreed that Old Disaster should accompany the minister on the way. Perdition, who was as good as a man any time, was to go along, too.

At the appointed time they took leave of the others and set out.

Then the mother and her two happy daughters set about making them comfortable in the absence of the old hero.

Dan and Peter shot an abundance of game every day and brought it in. The women dressed it, cured it and stowed it away in the cavern under the bluff for use the following winter.

It was their intention to put in a year's supply by the time Old Disaster returned.

One day a Miami hunting party came to the cabin and wanted to see Old Disaster. Neither Dan nor Peter could understand them and they went away after partaking of the hospitality of the house.

A few days later, as Dan and Peter were on the south side of the river, Sarah and her mother were startled at seeing a band of redskins running toward the cabin.

They barely had time to close the cabin door when a score of savages pushed against it with all their might.

But the heavy door was fastened on the inside, and its strength was such as to defy them.

The redskins soon learned that only the women were at home.

Then they yelled like so many demons and began chopping the door with their tomahawks.

The heroic women were equal to the emergency. They seized their rifles and opened fire on them.

At the first fire two redskins fell dead and a third was wounded.

On the other side of the river Dan and Peter heard the yells of the redskins.

They ran for their canoe and began rowing straight across, right in full view of the Indians.

Crack! crack! crack!

"Ah! the girls are firing!" cried Dan, as he heard the keen, whiplike reports of the rifles. "Look! two of the redskins are down!"

Crack! crack! crack!

"Three more are down! Pull, Peter, pull! We must reach them in ten minutes!"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A MAIDEN'S LOVE TURNED TO HATE.

The approach across the river in the face of a band of armed savages was an exceedingly dangerous proceeding. The redskins had bows and arrows, with which they were expert.

But the young wives of the two daring young hunters were in danger, and that was enough to make them face death a thousand times in getting to their assistance.

The redskins saw them coming and ran to the brow of the bluff to send a shower of arrows upon them the moment they should get in range.

But on the bluff they were fair targets for the rifles in the hands of the three women in the cabin.

At each fire a redskin went down. But they were so eager to get a chance to kill or capture the two men in the canoe that they did not at first see the effect of the rifles.

But Dan and Peter noticed the result of every shot.

One tall savage stood so close to the brink of the precipice that when a bullet struck him between the shoulders he gave a yell and plunged downward one hundred feet below to the water.

At last the canoe brought them within range of the arrows and a shower of them fell all around them.

"Let's give 'em some lead!" exclaimed Dan, dropping the oar and taking up his rifle.

"Yes," said Peter, following his example.

They both took good aim and fired.

Five redskins fell.

The women in the cabins behind them had fired three shots at the same time with Dan and Peter.

That was too much for the redskins.

They retreated to the woods, wondering at the terrible effects of the palefaces' weapons.

Dan and Peter again took up their oars, and in a few minutes more were in the cavern under the bluff.

To pull the canoe up on the beach and then hasten upstairs to the brave women did not detain them very long.

As they sprang up through the trap-door they were clasped in the arms of their wives.

Dan hugged and kissed Sarah at least a dozen times in as many seconds, and Peter subjected Martha to the same pleasant ordeal.

The Mingoos went away thinking the paleface women as bad as the men.



Days and weeks passed and they began to feel uneasy about the non-arrival of Old Disaster. He had been gone more than a month and nothing had been heard of him.

But one day Perdicion came bounding up to the cabin door, barking joyously.

Dan gathered the faithful dog in his arms and hugged him.

But the three women ran out to meet the old hero.

Sarah was the fleetest of foot and reached him first. Then Martha and her mother came next.

They gave him such a welcome as made his heart leap within him. He kissed them all and said:

"It does me good to be with those I love again. I want to rest a week and let you pet me. I want you to pet Perdicion, too. He gave me warning every time a redskin came about."

That evening Old Disaster told the story of his adventures on the long trip. He met old friends and made new ones over in the older settlements.

"A dozen families are comin' over in the fall," he said, "so we won't be lonesome hyer any more."

Things were going along smoothly at the cabin, and the three couples were as happy as birds when an incident happened to cast a shadow over their spirits.

They were seated in front of the cabin enjoying the evening breezes when the tall form of Black Hawk, the Miami chief, was seen approaching.

Old Disaster arose and went forward to meet him.

"The palefaces are glad to see their red brother," he said, in Miami. "He is welcome to their cabin."

"Ugh!" grunted Black Hawk, as he looked the old hunter in the face. "Paleface's words make the red man's heart glad," and he stopped and seemed to have something on his mind that was troubling him.

"What is it that troubles my red brother?" the old hunter asked, after a pause. "Let him speak. The white man is his friend."

Then the chief told him the story of his courtship of Lau-too-na. She would not listen to him at all. Nothing that he would say or do could pacify her. She loved the great white chief and would be nobody else's wife. In his distress he had come to the white chief for advice.

"When she hears that I have a paleface wife here," said Old Disaster, "she will listen to the wooing of the great chief."

"Is paleface got a wife?" the chief asked.

"Yes. Come, I'll show her to you."

He led the chief forward and, taking his wife by the hand, told him that she was his wife, and that her two daughters were the wives of his two sons.

The chief looked at them and his dark face brightened up as he did so.

He thought he would have a chance to win Lau-too-na now.

Old Disaster invited him to stay all night, and gave him the fourth room, which had been built for the minister to sleep in.

The chief had never slept in a white man's cabin before, and the novelty was extremely pleasing to him.

The next morning he set out to return to his village.

In two days he was again courting the princess of the Miamis.

He told her the white chief whom she loved was already married to the mother of the two paleface maidens.

Her dark, lustrous eyes flashed fire.

She would not believe him. She accused him of having a crooked tongue and of lying to forward his own suit.

"Will Lau-too-na go with me and see the wife of the great white chief?" he asked.

"Yes," she said.

Black Hawk took an escort of his braves and set out with her to see the happy family on the banks of the Ohio.

Old Disaster did not dream of a visit from him or her.

He was seated by the side of his wife with an arm around her waist when Lau-too-na surprised them.

She appeared before them very suddenly, looking daggers at the old hunter's wife.

"Lau-too-na has come back," she said, in Miami, addressing Old Disaster. "She loves the great white chief."

"The white chief has a wife. He cannot love the daughter of the Miamis," he replied, rising to his feet and standing between her and his wife.

She stepped back a couple of paces, as if to get a good look at him.

Then she placed both hands over her heart and held them there, as though an acute pain had suddenly struck her there.

Old Disaster watched her dusky face and saw the expression of her features change like that of a dying person; then it seemed to change again to a look of hopeless despair.

"How she must suffer," whispered Sarah to Dan, with tears of sympathy in her eyes.

"My heart bleeds for her," said Martha to her husband.

Mrs. Robinson arose and entered the cabin, not caring to look upon the dark face of the Indian maiden.

But the others watched her.

From love her beautiful face took on a scowl of fierce hate.

Casting a look of hate and scorn at the man she once loved, she turned away without uttering another word and rejoined Black Hawk and his braves, who were awaiting her in the woods.

When she came back to the chief she said to him that when he brought her the scalps of the white chief and his wife she would be his wife.

Black Hawk was not at all pleased with the task she had given him to do.

He had met the old hunter once in a fight, and did not like to do so again.

They went away, and our heroes believed that would be the last they would ever see of Lau-too-na.

For several days they were all sorrowing for the poor girl, and did not know that she was meditating vengeance till a solitary Indian whose life had once been saved by Dan came to the old man and told him that Lau-too-na had succeeded in arousing the Miamis to make war on them by making them believe that Old Disaster was forming a secret league with the Mingoes.

Old Disaster was thunderstruck.

He knew that Black Hawk was so blindly in love with the girl that she could do with him as she pleased.

He thanked the brave for telling him of his danger and then went into the cabin to consult Dan and Peter about it.

While they were discussing the case the dog came running in and gave the alarm of redskins about.

In a little while a swarm, at least a thousand Miami warriors, came in sight from the woods in the rear of the cabin.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE END OF LAU-TOO-NA.

A few minutes after the warriors showed themselves the tall form of Black Hawk was seen approaching the cabin.

He called upon the old chief of the palefaces to come out and see the Miamis go on the warpath. They were going to destroy the Mingoes.

"Black Hawk's tongue is crooked," replied Old Disaster. "He has come to make war on the palefaces, whose friend he should be. The palefaces know that the daughter of the great chief, Grey Eagle, has tempted him to do wrong, for which the Great Spirit will punish them both."

At that Black Hawk gave a whoop and a thousand arrows whistled through the air and struck the cabin.

(Continued on page 26).



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(Continued from page 24).

That was the signal for the attack, for the redskins then rushed forward with their tomahawks to cut down the door.

At the first fire from the cabin Black Hawk fell, shot through the heart.

Then the whole band stopped.

The words of the paleface had come true—the Great Spirit would punish him—and hence they hesitated.

Seeing the warriors hesitate, Lau-too-na seized a tomahawk and rushed forward to animate them.

But an Indian, whatever chivalric qualities he may have, has none of that gallantry about him that would induce him to fight under the lead of a woman.

They did not move at her call.

She looked at them for a few moments and then hurled her tomahawk at them with a screech of contempt and made a break for the bluff.

She ran with the speed of a deer till she reached the brow of the precipice.

There she stopped.

Looking out over the rolling river, more than one hundred feet below, she began a song in clear, silvery tones.

It was the story of her love—that love for which she was to die.

Suddenly the song ended.

The maiden gave a last look at the cabin, and then, clasping her hands above her head, looked up at the blue sky, as if in a silent prayer for a minute or two, and then leaped over the precipice.

The dusky denizens of the forest stood like so many statues for several minutes, as if held to the spot by some magic spell.

Then, as if moved by a sudden impulse, the entire band turned and disappeared in the woods.

Not a sound came from the forest after the last Indian was seen. Our heroes waited several hours before venturing out to see if any were lurking about.

As everything remained quiet as the grave, Old Disaster went out to investigate.

He found the savages had gone away, leaving their dead chief where he had fallen.

As spring advanced and ripened into the fullness of summer it became now certain that the Miamis would trouble them no more.

As the summer waned and the leaves began to brown the happy family were most agreeably surprised by the arrival of a party of white families from the settlements in Virginia.

## CHAPTER XX.

### CONCLUSION.

The arrival of the party of settlers was a Godsend to our heroes.

They wanted more of their race about them, and hence, as they retired to the cavern to sleep, Old Disaster told them of the great safety a residence on the bluff would give them.

They saw how the cavern would always afford them a safe retreat in the event of danger, and agreed among themselves to make their home there.

The next morning they went to work with axes—nineteen men—cutting timber and building cabins after the model of the one already built.

All of them communicated with the secret passage to the cavern below, so that escape to the lower region would be easy at any time.

In one month's time the cabins were finished and the families moved into them. Then hunting parties of ten men were sent out at a time, leaving nine at home for protection to the families.

While the hunters were out those at home worked like

beavers in building a stockade around the group of cabins. It was built with great care, so that no crevice was left through which an Indian could shoot an arrow at a child playing anywhere in the enclosure.

When that was finished the women all rejoiced, for the could now go about from one cabin to another without any fear whatever.

The winter came on and snow covered every inch of ground to the depth of a foot or more. But, as they had plenty of fuel and provisions stored up, our heroes had nothing to do but enjoy the rest they had earned.

During the long winter evenings Old Disaster would sit, surrounded by the newcomers, telling the story of his life on the banks of the Ohio. They never tired of listening to the old hero. As for Perdition, they loved him as no dog was ever loved before.

"He can smell a redskin a half mile away," said Old Disaster, patting the dog on the head, "an' he never spoilt my game by pitching in before I was ready. He'd lie down in the bushes an' watch 'em by the hour without even winking an eye. Then, if I said so, he'd dart at 'em like a rattler, an' some redskin'd git his throat gripped."

During the early part of the winter Sarah, Martha and their mother all gave birth to bouncing babies. Old Disaster's babe was a boy. The others were girls.

"The settlement is growing," said the old hunter, with a happy laugh. "We'll have to build more cabins soon."

A happier family could not be found than the Robinsons.

Sarah and Martha never ceased blessing the hour that threw them in the way of Old Disaster and his two sons. As for their mother, on whom the hand of trouble once bore so heavily, she was as young in heart as any young mother in the settlement. She was proud of her husband, proud of his baby and loved the bronzed old hero with a deathless devotion.

She was yet in the prime of her life, and as the years rolled by presented him with five more children.

Sarah and Martha each bore ten children, who grew up men and women equal to the exigencies of a life on the frontier.

The little settlement on the north bank of the Ohio grew apace till it burst the limits of the stockade and spread out far beyond them.

By and by, when the British had been whipped out of America, emigrants poured over the Alleghanies and settled on the fertile banks of the Ohio. Cities and towns sprang up here and there and the redskins retired before the onward march of civilization.

Old Disaster lived to a ripe old age and was then laid away to rest on the banks of the great river he loved so well. His descendants still reside there in the great valley, where his history is one of the most precious of all the legends of the early settlers.

Read "THE FLYERS OF THE GRIDIRON; OR, HALF-BACK HARRY, THE FOOTBALL CHAMPION," by Howard Austin, which will be the next number (651) of "Pluck and Luck."

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## BRIEF, BUT POINTED.

It is said that the "sacred running oxen" of Ceylon never attain a height above thirty inches.

A French statistician estimates that about 550,000 motor cars have been manufactured in the nine years since the experiments of self-propelled road vehicles first succeeded.

As the result of experimenting it has been found that the greyhound is the fastest of all four-footed animals. When going at full gallop it can cover twenty yards a second, or about a mile in a minute and twenty-eight seconds—a speed that comes very near that of a carrier pigeon.

A notorious usurer in Kragujeveta, Servia, was about to ruin several families who owed him large sums of money. To protect them, Sara Chumitez, the usurer's wife, poisoned him. She was tried, convicted, and at once pardoned. Loud cheers greeted her as she left the court.

A man owning corner property planted three trees, one at the corner, the other two about fifteen feet down either street. The trees down the street thrived, but the one on the corner withered and finally died. Again and again the man set out new trees at the corner, but his efforts to beautify that spot failed. Each tree made a feeble attempt to take root, but soon gave it up and followed in the way of its predecessors. "How do you account for it?" asked the property owner of an arboriculturist. "The soil is good, and I take excellent care of the trees. Why do they die?" "I don't know," said the expert; "but it is a fact that a corner tree is twice as likely to die as one in the middle of the block. Look at all the dwarfed, stunted trees in New York's streets and you will find that three-fourths of the failures stand on the corner."

The recent court held by King Edward and Queen Alexandra lends interest to the inquiry as to what it costs for a debutante to make her curtsy to the King and Queen. A certain amount of exaggeration has attached itself to the expenditure which is cited as necessary for a court outfit. The all-important dress may cost thousands of dollars, and tens of thousands of dollars, but, on the other hand, a very dainty little debutante at the last court only spent \$25 on her frock. It was made by a good dressmaker and the train was lent by a friend. A calculation has been made to decide the maximum and minimum cost of a presentation at court.

There is, of course, practically no limit to the expenditure which might be involved. A gown may be sewn with real jewels. A petticoat may be fashioned of priceless lace. A feather fan may be adorned with sticks of gold. All that can be done is to take a fair average of the sum total which would be considered necessary by a society debutante. The minimum cost is a more difficult matter. The most rigid economy must be practised, and the greatest difficulty which will present itself will be to invest a comparatively small sum on the outfit and yet to compare favorably with the woman who has spent three times the amount. The fact that it is now possible to hire a court train has proved a veritable boon to many debutantes. The price varies from \$12 to \$30, but a very dainty train of chiffon, lace and touches of silver embroidery can be procured for the evening at a charge of \$15.

Rattlesnake oil is preserved and prepared very carefully for use as a liniment in some parts of the world. Rheumatism and sore joints are the ailments in which it is chiefly employed. The fat is taken from the dead reptile and laid upon a cloth in the hot sun, from which the filtered oil drips into a jar. From fear that the reptile may be bitten itself, the clear oil is tested by dropping a portion of it into milk. If it floats in one globule it is regarded as unaffected. If it breaks into beads and curdles the milk it is judged to be poisonous and thrown away.

## OUR COMIC COLUMN.

"What is the matter with Fido?" "Oh, isn't it horrid? I gave him to the laundress to wash, and she starched him."

Wife—Waiter, my husband has found a long hair in his soup. Waiter—Well, has that made you jealous already?

"I understand they were married in haste." "Yes, they told the minister to hurry because there was only a little gasoline left in their automobile, and they were twenty miles from home."

Mrs. Byers—Mrs. Cassidy next door was talking to-day about her Irish blood and "the struggle of '98." I wonder what she means by that? Mr. Byers—Sounds like a fight at a bargain sale.

Tommy—Paw, how much are you worth? Mr. Tucker—About \$4,000, my son. Why? Tommy (after a few moments of deep thought)—Paw, how much does the assessor fine you for having all that?

"You're a very naughty boy to throw that muddy starfish at my little niece and dirty her nice white hat; I shall go straight up to the town and tell your mother. Where does she live?" "At the Marine Laundry, mum, opposite the pier."

"Granny," said little Johnnie, as he counted a lot of nuts somebody had given him, "can you eat nuts?"

"No, dear," said the old lady, "I haven't got any teeth."

"Well, then," said Johnnie, emptying his nuts into granny's lap, "I'll give you these to mind till I come back."

When they had broken into a dozen houses, the burglars paused to see how they stood. "Is there anything else worth taking in this neighborhood?" asked the short man. The tall man pointed to a stately mansion not far off. "That," quoth he, "is the home of the general counsel of a number of trusts. If we could break in there, and take some advice, it would come handy, in case we should be caught."



## A BOX OF PEARLS

By D. W. Stevens.

The packet ship Shanghai Mary was a craft of eight hundred tons burden, laden with a miscellaneous cargo, and bound from San Francisco to Tellicherry on the Malabar coast of India, in command of Captain Ralph Roy, with a crew of fifteen.

Among the latter was an orphan boy of seventeen named Billy McGregor.

He was a sturdy, blue-eyed, dark-haired fellow, who acted as cabin boy and supercargo, and his jolly good nature made him a great favorite with the ship's company.

The cook was a dark-skinned Hindoo named Dambool, of a morose, surly disposition, and was most cordially disliked by every one on board.

At the time we allude to the Shanghai Mary, with all sails set to catch the faint breeze, was drifting along the Coromandel coast toward the Strait of Palk on the north of Ceylon, when eight bells struck the noon hour, and Dambool came rushing out of his kitchen with a tray in his hands, upon which was arranged a delicious dinner for the captain in his cabin.

Unfortunately, Billy was passing directly in the cook's way, and in his haste Dambool collided with the boy with such force that the young supercargo was sent reeling into the scuppers, and the tray and its contents flew up in the air and landed on the deck with a terrific jingle and crash.

"Fool!" screamed the enraged Hindoo, as he glared at the laughing boy. "Why you do dat? Oh, de dishes all broke! I break your neck!"

In a paroxysm of fury he rushed at the cabin boy, when Billy shouted:

"Hold on, you lunkhead! It wasn't my fault! I wasn't anxious to get plastered."

But ere another word passed his lips the Hindoo reached him, clutched him by the throat and pressed his windpipe till he began to choke.

Realizing what a murderous mood the man was in, the smile left Billy's face, and hauling off his clenched fist, he dealt the big, hulking fellow a blow on the nose that caused him to relax his hold and recoil, uttering a cry of pain.

With all his vengeful spite aroused, Dambool recovered himself and made a rush for the now angry boy, when they clenched and fell, struggling fiercely, to the deck, the noise bringing the captain from his cabin.

He rushed up to the struggling pair, and found the cook kneeling on the boy's stomach, while with both hands clutched in Billy's hair, he was slamming the boy's head up and down, trying to beat his brains out on the deck.

"Stop, you scoundrel!" roared the captain. "You'll kill the boy!"

He dealt the infuriated Hindoo a blow that sent him sprawling, and the half-dazed and food-bespattered boy arose and explained the cause of the trouble.

By the time he finished, Dambool had scrambled to his feet, his face was convulsed into a most demoniacal expression, and shaking his fist at the boy and the captain, he hissed in malignant tones:

"May Buddha curse you! I make you both pay dear for dem blows!"

The Hindoo slunk away into the galley, muttering imprecations on them in his native tongue, and the boy retired down in the forecabin to take off his sailor suit and put on a hunt-

ing costume, which was the only extra suit he possessed, for his uniform was plastered with the skipper's dinner.

When Billy returned to the deck, he found that Dambool had served the crew's rations there, and the scowling cook brought him his allowance in a tin platter, shot a malicious glance at him, and silently went away again.

There was a singular odor coming from the stew, and the boy's suspicions at once became aroused against the vindictive cook.

"I am not going to eat this stuff," he remarked to the men that comprised the watch who sat near him. "Don't you notice the smell?"

"'Twouldn't s'prise me if that lubber put pizen in it," said one of the sailors.

"Just what I fear," said the boy, distrustfully. "Don't you see that the color is different than yours? I'm going to report this to Captain Roy."

"No need, my boy," interposed the skipper, who had just then drawn near and overheard the boy's remark. "I'll test the truth of your distrust by forcing Dambool to eat that stew himself. Call him out here, Tom!"

Every one became interested at once, for the crew were indignant, and feared that the Hindoo might poison them if he chose to do so.

One of the sailors brought the dark fellow out on deck, and fixing a stern glance upon him, the captain pointed at Billy's stew platter, and said:

"See here, Dambool, I am led to suppose you are trying to poison Billy."

"Me?" echoed the Hindoo, in tones of virtuous indignation. "No, no, sahib cappen."

"Then prove that the stew is wholesome by eating it yourself!"

A sickly look of horror stole over the Hindoo's face at this suggestion, and he recoiled a step, glancing from one of the men to the other, and faltered:

"Me no hungry, sah, for I hab my dinner, an' no can eat some more."

"Then eat a portion! You can't get out of it. I won't be satisfied till you do."

"Can't eat some more, sahib cappen—can't!" protested the man in alarm.

"You act guilty! If you don't devour it, I'll force you to."

A fit of excessive trembling suddenly overwhelmed the Hindoo, and he crept back step by step toward the galley as if very anxious to get away, his snaky, black eyes roving restlessly about, and a haunted look on his face.

It was very evident to all hands that the man was guilty of the vile work of an assassin, and their rage against him arose to the boiling point.

"Seize him and cram the stew down his throat!" exclaimed the captain.

Several of the men made a rush for Dambool, and with a yell of terror the frightened wretch sped away across the deck, but they caught him.

He was knocked down, and while some held him, the rest pinched his nose, forced open his mouth, and filled it with the stew, so that he had either to swallow it or choke to death.

He chose the former alternative, and when they had thus forced him to eat half of the mess they let him go, he bounded to his feet, and rushing into the galley, he locked the door, fastening himself in.

"There can be no doubt of his guilt," commented the captain. "If he survives the stuff, I'll put him in irons, and land him in prison when we return to San Francisco. Billy, come into my cabin, and I'll share my food with you, as it has not been tampered with."



And so saying, the captain walked away, followed by the boy.

In the afternoon Billy became convinced that the Hindoo had taken an emetic, judging from the sounds that came from within the galley, and he heard the Hindoo groaning until the fall of night.

Evidently he had survived the drug, but they could not get at him without bursting down the door, so they let him be there.

As the moon arose upon the calm waters, the Shanghai Mary went down the coast in the Gulf of Manaar, and a fleet of pearl-divers' feluccas was seen flying along the coast, as if in pursuit of one of the boats that seemed only to contain one man.

Billy was the first to observe this fact, and turning to the captain, he said:

"The fugitive is a white man, and those dark fellows are firing at him."

"Good Heaven! Is it possible! What can be the matter, I wonder?"

"That's hard to tell, but I think we ought to interfere in his behalf."

"Just my sentiments, my lad. I'll head the ship that way."

Roy gave the quartermaster orders to tack off to the leeward, just as the fugitive felucca shot into a lagoon, and the pursuing boats followed.

Upon arriving at the mouth of the lagoon, however, the Shanghai Mary had to luff into the wind, as her draught precluded the possibility of her sailing into the shallow water where the feluccas could go.

"We can't do anything, after all!" said the skipper, despairingly.

"Let me have a boat and a few men," replied Billy, "and I'll row in."

"Very well. Arm yourself with my rifle and cartridge belt. There are enough weapons on board for four of my men."

Orders were issued to lower a boat, as the ship stood up in the wind's eye with fluttering canvas, and four volunteers armed themselves.

Billy procured the captain's rifle and cartridge belt from the cabin, and, buckling the latter around his waist, he returned to the deck just in time to see Dambool rush from the galley to the bulwarks and spring overboard.

In a few minutes one of the quarter-boats went down, was manned, and taking his place in the stern sheets, Billy issued the order to give away.

He steered the boat into the lagoon, from whence there came the sound of pistol shots, and there saw that the fugitive felucca had run aground, and the three pursuers stood up in the wind, near the embankment, while their dusky crews were discharging their firearms at the white man.

The latter individual had jumped ashore, and just as the quarter-boat appeared, he was rushing up the embankment, with a box clasped in his hands, when a ball from one of the weapons reached him.

He uttered a despairing cry, and fell to the ground, mortally wounded.

"They've killed the poor fellow!" gasped Billy. "Fire upon them, boys!"

They discharged a volley from their weapons at the pearl-divers, who, upon seeing some white men coming to the rescue of the one they shot, at once tacked their boats away, to escape.

Across the lagoon they fled, without returning a shot, and sending their feluccas out on the sea, they vanished around the headland.

The sailors bent to their oars, and soon drove the boat ashore.

Here the boy disembarked, and hurrying up the embankment to the prostrate figure of the sailor, who lay half buried in the jungle of tall lemon grass, he bent over, and found him conscious, but dying.

"How did this happen?" anxiously asked the boy.

The sailor panted hard for breath a moment, and just then the bushes behind Billy parted, and the ugly, scowling countenance of Dambool appeared.

"I wuz wrecked among ther pearl-fishers," huskily said the sailor. "They made a slave o' me. To-day I collected a lot of fine pearls wot I gathered an' hid, an' stole one of thar feluccas. They chased me. Ther pearls is in that box lyin' on ther ground. Take 'em an'——"

But he never finished that sentence, for he suddenly groaned, stretched out, the death rattle sounded in his throat and he expired.

"Poor fellow!" muttered Billy. "I wonder who he is?"

He glanced down sorrowfully at the man a moment, and then remembering the box of pearls alluded to, he turned around to find it, when to his utter astonishment he saw Dambool stoop over, pick up the box, dash into the jungle with it and speed away like a deer.

Billy had dropped his rifle on the ground when attending to the sailor, and running over to the weapon, he picked it up and rushed into the jungle after the flying Hindoo, determined to recapture the rascal and recover the box of pearls.

Suddenly the jungle parted, an enormous boar appeared within a few feet of Billy, and grasping the rifle by the barrel with both hands, Billy raised it over his head to defend himself.

For a moment the boar stood glaring at the boy, its small eyes and white tusks gleaming, and then it charged on him.

He waited until it arrived close to his legs, and then brought the butt of his rifle down upon its long snout with a bang that knocked the brute over.

Away ran the boar about fifty paces, tearing through the thorny jungle as if it were a cobweb, his nose plowing up the ground, and roar after roar peeling from his mouth.

He soon turned to charge upon the boy again, but met the Hindoo creeping away in the jungle, covered with wounds, and at once made a target of the rascally black. The man's screams brought Billy rushing to the spot, and there he saw the unfortunate wretch, breathing his last, and the boar running away like an avalanche through the jungle at his approach.

Before the boy could reach the Hindoo, the man was dead.

"That beast has saved me the trouble of killing you!" the boy muttered, as he glanced down at the mutilated remains in disgust.

He picked up the box which Dambool yet clutched under his arm, and, opening it, he found it half filled with magnificent white pearls.

Leaving the corpse of the Hindoo where it lay, he retraced his steps, and reaching the lagoon, he saw that the crew of the boat had buried the sailor.

They were all glad to hear that the Hindoo had perished, after the cowardly deed he attempted, and regretted the death of the unknown sailor.

As Billy had secured the box of pearls, it was conceded that they were rightfully his, so he kept them.

The ship then sailed away, one of the sailors doing the cooking in place of Dambool, and the voyage was finally completed.

Upon the return of the Shanghai Mary to San Francisco, the boy left the vessel, sold the pearls and realized a large sum of money.

With this he started himself in business, and to-day is one of the most successful merchants in California.



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